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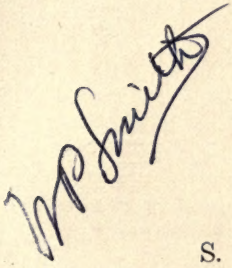
MORAL ORDER AND PROGRESS:

AN ANALYSIS OF ETHICAL CONCEPTIONS.



BY

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FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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TO

MY FORMER TUTOR

A. C. BRADLEY

SOMETIME FELLOW OF BALLIOL COLLEGE OXFORD AND NOW PROFESSOR OF MODERN LITERATURE AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LIVERPOOL

WHOSE TEACHING INSPIRED ME TO PURSUE

THE STUDY OF ETHICS

I GRATEFULLY DEDICATE

THIS BOOK.

2052610

PREFACE.

THE following pages are based upon a dissertation for which I obtained the Green Moral Philosophy Prize at Oxford in 1887. The subject proposed was, "In what directions does Moral Philosophy at the present time seem to you to admit or require advance?" I have completely re-written my essay, without reference to the original question, and have greatly augmented it. I am proud to have my work connected, however indirectly, with the name of T. H. Green; and I feel this all the more because, though, as will be obvious, my obligations to him are very great, I have not scrupled to express my present dissent from his fundamental principles.

The title of the book indicates its substance: it is an account of the various elements contained in moral order and moral progress; the sub-title (under which the work was originally announced) describes its method, which is that of grouping together ethical facts under the main working conceptions used in morality. In the Introduction I have fully explained the object and plan of the work; and have only to add here a few remarks of a more personal character. To record obligations to other writers is always a difficult matter, because it is really

impossible to determine the extent of them. Very often an apparent discovery is nothing but remembering something forgotten. Most often what one discovers for oneself has been anticipated. Many a time (and I am assured that the experience is a common one) I have spent days or weeks of reflection upon a subject, and, having arrived at a conclusion, have read it next day in a book. This is gratifying to one's love of truth, and I have tried to suppress a *pereat qui ante nos.* Mr. Leslie Stephen will perhaps not be displeased if I say that his admirable work, *The Science of Ethics,* has been quite an education to me in this sort of self-restraint. Where I have consciously borrowed, I have usually said so. But to do more than this would be to give a history of my mind, and I should not care to offend against what seems to be a canon, that a man may not write his reminiscences till he is middle-aged. But perhaps I may say that I have come to the ideas, borrowed from biology and the theory of Evolution, which are prevalent in modern ethics, with a training derived from Aristotle and Hegel, and I have found not antagonism, but, on the whole, fulfilment. Though I have insisted on the differences between moral and other action, the result of the book is to show that these differences are exactly what should be expected if the theory of Evolution were true. As for myself, I claim only to have worked independently, and to have put things in my own way. I shall be amply rewarded if my work is thought to contribute something to the advance of the science, and if, where it is found wrong, its errors are judged to be of the kind which easily suggest truths.

I have not been able to abstain from all criticism. With greater literary skill I might perhaps have reduced the already not very great bulk of it. But even if it were possible, I question if to avoid criticism or all reference to others is quite desirable. It encourages the idea that a writer of philosophy begins his subject entirely on his own account; and because this is not so, the scoffer comes and says it is all repetition. However, I hope I have abstained altogether from merely destructive criticism. Mere polemic is always irritating, often uninstructive, seldom respectful, and never convincing. Every honest fallacy is the misinterpretation of some truth, and it is much more important (and, I may add, much more difficult) to exhibit this truth, than to show that the argument is a fallacy. Any one can see that Achilles must catch the tortoise; but if you show how the mistake arises in the argument which proves that he cannot, you discover a profound truth about the infinite divisibility of finite magnitudes.

It is a pleasure to me to thank the friends who have helped me with the book. Miss Orme and Mr. D. G. Ritchie read through the proofs, and made many valuable suggestions, and Mr. P. E. Matheson has laid me under a like obligation with the revises. To conversations with Mr. Ritchie I owe some hints for working out the details of Book III. Prof. Wallace and Mr. R. L. Nettleship, two of the judges of the prize, and Mr. J. S. Haldane, were good enough to give me the benefit of their advice and criticisms upon the earlier form of the work. But I owe a special debt of gratitude to Mr. F. H. Bradley, who most kindly went through the original essay with me.

Mr. Bradley is not responsible for anything I write, but I feel that but for his searching criticism my work would be much more imperfect even than it is at present.

S. ALEXANDER.

OLD HEADINGTON, OXFORD,
January 1889.

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MORAL ORDER AND PROGRESS:

AN

ANALYSIS OF ETHICAL CONCEPTIONS.

INTRODUCTION.

I.—Object of the Inquiry.

1. In describing this work as an Analysis of Ethical Conceptions, or, in other words, an attempt to group ethical data under the chief conceptions used in moral affairs, I am limiting it to one portion of ethical science, while at the same time indicating the purpose of the inquiry.

The proper business of ethics is the study of moral judgments, such as that it is right to pay one's debts, and wrong to lie, which express approval or disapproval of certain kinds of human conduct. If we prefer to say that the subject of the science is human conduct itself, we must still be careful to add that it is human conduct not as it appears to the physiologist or even the psychologist, but as submitted to the praise or censure contained in moral judgments. Ethics is one of the group of sciences called normative, because instead of dealing with assertions they apply a standard. Aesthetics applies a standard of beauty, ethics a standard of goodness or right. A judgment may either mean a proposition or statement, or it may mean the sentence of a judge. The judgments of physics are of the first kind, moral judg-

ments of the second. Leaving to a later stage the inquiry in what sense such judgments can represent facts, we have only to observe that though the primary ethical facts are judgments about conduct, they are not therefore mere opinions: that conduct is not that which is 'judged' to be right as distinguished from that which *is* right.

There are therefore two portions into which the science falls. One part of the task of ethics is to supply a *catalogue raisonné* of the various moral judgments which make up the contents of the moral consciousness, an orderly, systematic description of the moral observances of life. This is the most laborious and perhaps the most important part of ethics, but it does not enter into my plan. It will only be discussed, and a sketch of such a catalogue added, in so far as certain ideas are implied in the classification.

The other and more abstract department of the science consists in discussing what the nature of morality is, in explaining, not what classes or kinds of duties are comprehended under the mass of moral judgments, but what it is that the moral judgment as such expresses. The following study aims at accomplishing this object by an examination of the working conceptions of ethics, which shall show to what facts these conceptions correspond. Every department of knowledge has such working conceptions (such as those of energy, matter, attraction, molecular motion in physics, or those of simple elements, composition, atom, chemical affinity in chemistry), under which the facts of the science are grouped. Similarly in our common statements of morality we use certain conceptions. Some of these are directly normative, such as the fundamental antithesis of right and wrong, good and bad, and the idea of a moral end or of a common good; and there are others, like duty, virtue, conscience, which stand in immediate connection with the standard. When we are bidden to aim at perfection or assured that right-doing will be for our happiness, we have two conceptions used in more specific definition of the moral end. But there are other

conceptions which, entering constantly into our moral judgments, do not so much describe a standard of judgment as certain phenomena upon which morality depends. Such are altruism, self-sacrifice, punishment, and the idea of conduct itself,—we approve an act because it was disinterested, or we declare that certain conduct is deservedly punished. In analysing all these conceptions we are referred for our data partly to the various moral judgments themselves, using them, however, with a different purpose than when we are seeking a classification of morality, partly to other ethical phenomena, which we cannot always describe without borrowing for ethics chapters from psychology.

2. These ethical conceptions are, I may repeat, those which are current in ordinary moral experience: they are not called ethical simply because they are the working conceptions of the science. Some of them are indeed more reflective or specially scientific than others. Egoism, for instance, is a somewhat reflective conception, but in the form of self-love it is part and parcel of commonplace moral judgments. Progress is an idea which in its abstract form is not largely employed by the unreflective mind, but it corresponds to the unreflective conception of improvement or growing better. Science in fact is not something different in kind from ordinary experience, but classifies it, renders it accurate, and reduces it to order. Its conceptions are mostly those of ordinary use; and in turn it adds its own reflective ideas to the common currency. Nor again are ethical conceptions called so because they form the leading ideas of ethical theories. It is true that we must needs go to theories if we are to realise the meaning of our conceptions, and accordingly ethical theories will have constantly to be considered in the analysis. But ethical theories are themselves founded upon some salient ideas of the ordinary moral experience, and only carry a step further a process of unconscious theorising already begun. Thus we are told that our aim should be to be virtuous—that bad

acts will make us worse men: and straightway a moral theory prescribes virtue as the end of morality. Or we praise sympathy and disinterestedness: and a theory declares the principle of goodness to be benevolence.

3. It must be observed, by way of further explanation, that an analysis of these conceptions is not a mere dictionary which enumerates certain terms and explains their meanings: but as was before observed, is a grouping of the facts under these conceptions, and involves therefore a systematisation both of the facts and of the conceptions. The conceptions of a science are not independent, but stand to one another in relations of connection and subordination; and a scientific treatment of them will have to arrange them according to their natural coherence. Partly the analysis must be an inquiry into words, but such an inquiry, if not merely verbal, is never different from an examination into the nature of things.[1] And it is not in any way a peculiar method, but is followed only perhaps less consciously by every ethical theory alike: the difference is hardly more than a difference in the form of the exposition: it constructs rather by taking advantage of conceptions already attained, which it seeks to define and to put into orderly arrangement, than by working out in detail a single constructive principle. It differs from a dogmatic theory as to see the parts of a machine being put together differs from hearing the parts of the finished product explained: or as a museum with its objects arranged in cases according to their affinities differs from a deductive treatise. It has one great advantage, that it as much as possible ensures completeness so far as it goes, because it enables us to see different parts of the subject in their relative value. And further, since theories depend upon emphasising different parts of the subject they investigate, it helps to put these in their proper light, and to show the truths from which they derive their force. Suppose, for instance, in metaphysics we were discussing the ancient

[1] Compare Mill's *Logic*, vol. i. ch. viii. § 7, p. 171 (ed. viii.)

controversy of realism and idealism: we might prolong, for further centuries yet, the wrangle over the rival theories; but if we ask to what facts in our knowledge these conceptions correspond, we could balance the claims of either to be a suitable point of view, from which to take in the universe of things.

II.—Present Ethics.

4. Such an analysis might be left to justify itself, but explaining as it does the relative value of rival theories, it is particularly appropriate when there are very diverse theories which yet seem to be groping to some common point. Now nothing is more striking at the present time than the convergence of the main opposing ethical theories, at any rate, in our own country—on the one hand, the traditional English mode of thought, which advancing through utilitarianism has ended in the so-called evolutionary ethics; and on the other, the idealistic movement which is associated with the German philosophy derived from Kant. The convergence I speak of is not of course the mere agreement in practical precepts, which are only the data of the science and the common property of every thinker; nor is it found in those ultimate philosophical principles from which ethics can never be kept far removed, for these are as divergent as possible. It is rather an agreement in spirit, which, though often impalpable, is shown both in general method and in certain general results which, though fundamental for ethics, are what Bacon calls *media axiomata* in comparison with the ultimate first principles of philosophy.

The agreement in method may be described as consisting in an objectivity or impartiality of treatment, which we understand by the 'scientific' habit of mind, and are apt to associate with the study of the natural sciences because natural objects make fewer appeals to the prejudices. And doubtless the spread of scientific studies has con-

tributed to the growth of this habit of mind, which in ethics is visible in the willingness to submit to examination things which might seem to the *feelings* too valuable to endure the desecration of analysis. Hence a change in the mode of handling ethical questions. The old quarrel of intuitionism and experience, whether the moral faculty is inborn or derived from experience, has come to possess only an evanescent interest. Every one recognises that moral judgments depend on experience.[1] The issue now raised is, granting moral experience, what elements are implied in it, and does it contain or not some element which cannot be further explained?

5. The convergence in general results is still harder to define, but some measure of it may be obtained by comparing the idealist doctrine,[2] that morality is a common good realised in individual wills, with the view held by the latest, and as I think the most important evolutionist work on ethics,[3] that conduct is moral according as it contributes to social vitality. Both these views recognise that kind of proportion between the individual and his society, or between him and the law, which is expressed under the phrase, organic connection. This displacement of the individual from a position of supreme importance to one of co-ordination with society has been most obviously effected by the gradual inclusion of human affairs within the scope of evolution, which has extended to them the analogies of animal life. But it was prepared by a process, the steps of which I shall have occasion to trace more closely hereafter, which may be described as the widening of the interest of the individual. The theory of egoism, pure and simple, has been long dead; and having buried it, we have leisure to observe its merits. Its successor, utilitarianism, with its principle of the

[1] Thus Dr. Martineau, who stands nearest to the old intuitionists, allows that the conscience develops.—*Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii. pp. 377–9 (ed. i.)

[2] T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*.

[3] Mr. Leslie Stephen's *Science of Ethics*.

greatest happiness of the greatest number, enlarged the moral end, though all the members of this mass are to it still nothing but independent units, who form a society by their aggregation. Evolution has both continued the process of enlarging the individual interest and given shape and precision to the relation between the individual and the moral law. But the result which it has reached, this mutual interconnection of a man and his society, is not new; it was part of the final outcome given in the first quarter of the century to German idealism at the hands of Hegel, who took Kant's abstract formula and gave it body and life by treating the law of morality as realised in the institutions of society and the State. It is in this concrete social form that idealism has been transplanted into England,[1] and that it has continued to influence the country which gave it birth, but has since sent it like so many others of her children to seek its fortune in foreign lands.

6. It would be an entire misapprehension to suppose that this convergence upon the common idea of the organic nature of society was due solely to the influence of biological science. Researches into the early history of society have had a great effect upon ethics, but both these and the conceptions of natural science have only come in to corroborate a change accomplished elsewhere. Ethics is not a department of natural science, nor of history, and though it is sensitive to every movement of thought as a whole, when it changes, it does so in response to modifications in those practical data of which it treats and upon which its principles are built. The nature of the changes in detail I can only touch upon. There have been great advances in certain directions; modifications in the institutions of property and industry have taken place, and other changes are impending still; we have begun to recognise duties towards animals, and to pay a greater and

[1] The most important representatives are T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, and Mr. F. H. Bradley in *Ethical Studies*.

more intelligent respect to the conditions of health. But the chief change has been not so much in the tangible shape of new moral judgments as in what may be called a new adjustment or focussing of the moral vision, to which the conception of the organic unity of the individual and the law corresponds. It is of much greater interest to trace this movement in outline in connection with ethical theory than to chronicle the mere series of great ethical writers.

7. The movement which ethical theories have reflected has been plainest in the social and political history of the century. This history may be regarded as the development of the idea of freedom, one phase of the great phenomena presented by the growth of democracy. The course which the idea has taken has not always been the same in different countries, because, being a complex idea, it has appealed in different ways to different conditions. But in general its history represents the interaction of the two great elements which it implies. Freedom has a negative and a positive element. Negatively it requires free scope—the removal of restraints which impede a healthy development; positively it implies responsibility for right action, so that the bad man who is yet unfortunate enough to have command of great opportunities is not free, but a slave. To be free a man must be independent, but he must also deserve to be independent. Now the growth of democracy has exhibited a double movement corresponding to these two elements, which are never found apart, but which are combined in very different proportions. It began with the negative impulse towards emancipation, with an insistence on individual rights, on the indefeasible claim of each person to have his own, to say his say, and to do the best for himself. But it has at the same time contained an impulse towards co-operation and solidarity, requiring that the effort of the individual should be regulated by the idea of a collective good. In the theoretical form given to its earliest beginnings, fraternity

ranked along with liberty. These two complementary elements are not peculiar to freedom, they are nearly always found wherever an idea has so much vitality that its believers can break up into parties, which pursue the same end in their different ways. The idea must be held by each person for himself, but it must also be an organised idea. In any institution of society these two elements, though neither exists without the other, will be found, each in its turn engrossing a party for itself, the one working for independence, the other for organisation. Familiar examples are offered by the division of the Christian Church into Catholic and Protestant Churches, or by the two great parties in the Anglican Church, the one of which thinks relatively more of the personal or individual character of its religion, the other relatively more of the organic communion created by religion, with its accompanying forms and its respect for authority.

Freedom has exhibited the same play of different elements. But for the most part, and especially in our own country, the negative element, the idea of independence, was first in the field, and it has had to be corrected by the sentiment of solidarity. This enlargement of the interest of the individual has not only taken place within the nation, but has extended beyond into a cosmopolitan sentiment, which has given colour to Comte's potent conception of humanity. The process has been greatly assisted by increased facility of communication, which has brought people within knowledge of each other, has broken down prejudices, while it has knit together interests. In no way has the force of steam been more beneficently employed than in expanding the sympathies of men for each other.

8. In England, to trace the movement in more detail, the principles of democracy came into contact with a long previous education in political liberties, and they never therefore took so exaggerated a form or issued in such desperate license as in France and elsewhere. Yet their

effect has been gigantic. The franchise was extended over a wider area, and has been since further extended; the slaves were emancipated; the corn-law agitation succeeded in throwing off restrictions upon trade; the right of association was conceded; the doctrine of the economists became the accepted principle of legislation, and it was only pushed to its conclusion in the famous theory that every one should shift for himself, under the proviso that he should not interfere with a similar liberty on the part of any one else. But this accentuation of independence was accompanied by a parallel movement of expansion, and the very men who upheld *laissez faire* were also, logically or not, the authors of the doctrine of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Then began the period of 'social' legislation, such as the regulation of factories, of contracts, of land tenure; in which the State seems to have become conscious of having a duty to its members other than that of protecting them against one another. The interest of the whole in all its parts has become a distinctive feature of our thought. We begin to feel that it is an unnatural way of thinking to hold that the State has only to hinder its members from becoming bad—it has not only to remove obstacles in the way of their progress, but by education, by encouragement of art, and the like, to supply them with positive opportunities. Now this idea of moral solidarity is in scientific terms the conception of organic unity of the whole and its parts, which we found to be implied in idealism and evolution alike.[1]

9. German philosophy has so powerfully affected English ethics that I will glance at the movement towards freedom in that country in its connection with philosophical theory. The course which the movement has taken is very different from that in England. Germany felt the emancipating shock, and the land and municipal reforms

[1] This is maintained here in spite of the fact that an evolutionist like Mr. Spencer is an opponent of many so-called 'social' measures, which I describe as proceeding from the interest taken by society in its members.

of Stein and Hardenberg, the establishment of a constitution first in Würtemberg and then in Prussia, were among its effects. But the negative element of freedom had to encounter a deeply rooted sentiment of the superior value of the State as a whole in contrast with its parts, and this has been and remains still the predominant conception of society. The strong dynastic government, and in Prussia, at any rate, the strict military organisation, at once explain, and are explained by, this emphasis of the State. Partly, too, the nation has been too concentrated on creating and defending its national unity for individualism to make great way in the form in which we know it in England. But yet individualism has made great advances, which have, however, been not so much in the direction of freeing individuals from control, as in mitigating the disciplinary and rigorous character of the State authority, and interesting the members of society to co-operate in a mode of life which is congenial to them. Hence the great extension of parliamentary rights and the development of the resources of the country, always under the control and protection of the central authority.

The history of ethical theory has corresponded with this development. German thinkers have always been impressed with the organic conformity of the individual to the type represented by the moral law and society. But though Kant's insistence on the universal character of reason enabled him to make a constructive ethical theory, he formulated the principle of morality with all the rigour of a military code.[1] The later history of idealism got rid of this abstract and disciplinary character. Hegel's theory of morals seemed to hold in solution both the element of solidarity and that of independence. After the decay of that once potent philosophy, individualism in philosophy

[1] Compare Seeley's *Life and Times of Stein*, vol. i. p. 42. "In the better natures it [the bureaucracy of Frederick II.] trained a martial sense of duty—duty in its most imperious and absolute form, which was of great value. The categorical imperative was appropriately first named and described in the age and country of Frederick the Great."

grew apace. It is remarkable that the theories of socialism, both that of state socialism, which is now being put into practice by Prince Bismarck, and the socialism of Marx, grew out of the left or individualistic wing of the Hegelian school, which produced also the scepticism of Feuerbach and the critical positivism of Strauss. Corresponding to the great increase of individual activity, German thought has flung itself upon the positive sciences, and has eagerly adopted the methods associated with the name of England. Ethics has indeed occupied till quite lately little attention.[1] But owing to the permanence of the sentiment of collective morality on the one hand and the gradual merging of empirical thought into evolutionary, the ethical theories that have been produced of recent years exhibit the same agreement in the idea of organic moral life as English theories.

10. The sentiment of solidarity, it may be added, is the bright side of a phenomenon of continental Europe which has a dark side as well, the institution of universal military service. The military spirit has obvious mischiefs, but they lie not in the practice of general service but in the maintenance of great standing armies; it is as dangerous for a whole nation to go armed as for a man to carry a sword in the streets. But it is mere prejudice to shut our eyes to the nobler feature of the institution, the devotion of a whole people to the defence of their ideal of moral life. This, too, in its modern form, is a lesson learned directly or indirectly from the French Revolution. In the *levée en masse*, which was made when the country was declared to be in danger, we have the establishment in a nation of an army like the citizen armies of the ancient city-states; and if we can trust the pictures drawn of the time (*e.g.*, by MM. Erckmann-Chatrian), the spirit which animated

[1] Professor Steinthal justly remarks that this is partly accounted for by the ethical character of the great German literature of the century and of its theory of art (*Allgemeine Ethik*, p. 7).

the men was far less the feeling of mere revenge and hatred of other nations than genuine ardour for the new principles of liberty. Napoleon's harsh domination taught the lesson to others. First Spain rose, and Germany followed its example. The reforms of Scharnhorst, which completely changed the military system inherited by Prussia from Frederick, were instituted in the time of Prussia's subjection, and prepared the way for the War of Liberation.[1] Subsequent events have made this system an established practice not of Germany only but of other nations as well.

11. This sketch of the practical basis of present ethics would be more inadequate than it is if I did not, even at the risk of digression, notice one other feature of the movement, the growing sense of the significance of pain. This is connected with both the positive and the negative elements in the growth of freedom. Positively, as we have seen, there has been a wide extension of sympathy growing out of larger knowledge, and this, while making the fate of masses of people more interesting, has caused it to be felt more personally. Now the sympathetic impulse fastens more directly upon pain than upon pleasure, partly because it is easier to understand pain (according to the famous saying of Jean Paul, that any man may grieve with another's grief, but it needs an angel to joy with his joy): partly because in the pity which pain awakens the sense of community with others is most directly felt. But if freedom in its positive aspect has made us more aware of pain, on its negative side it has helped actually to create the suffering, by the distraction of complex interests, the competition, the hurry and excitement of modern individualistic life, by the overwhelming sense of loneliness and weakness produced in the individual who is left to fight his way in the face of tremendous masses of men, who, while demanding his services, leave him in unregarded

[1] For these data I am again indebted to Professor Seeley's work on Stein.

insignificance. The alarming increase during the present century in the rate of suicide[1] is only one of the many symptoms of the presence of misery to which the scientific theory of pessimism appeals.

12. Returning from this survey to the point from which we started, the convergence of highly dissimilar theories affords some prospect of obtaining a satisfactory statement of the ethical truths towards which they seem to move. At the same time the limits are indicated within which the inquiry must remain if it is to be successful, namely, that it must confine itself to what is properly ethical, without venturing into the discussion of first principles. Without some ultimate presuppositions no one of course can reason; but so long as they are not used to distort ethical facts, they may be reserved for their own proper science. Now the analysis of ethical conceptions, or the discovery of what are the facts to which they correspond, will secure this impartiality and observe these limits, and it will itself show how far ethical data bear out the divergent interpretations put upon them. The relation of ethics to other sciences will come up for later consideration, and in connection with metaphysics it will be shown that so far from ethics depending on metaphysical first principles, some of the most important data for metaphysics are supplied by ethics itself. Here it is only necessary specially to define the position taken up by the proposed analysis towards the conception of evolution, which from its engrossing interest is in danger of being used with all the vagueness and indefiniteness of an idol of the market-place. The application of evolution to morals may mean only the employment of biological ideas, or it may mean that morals must be treated as one part of a comprehensive view of the universe, in which a steady development may be observed from the lowest to the highest phenomena, and a development, it may be added, which follows the law of the survival of the fittest. Now the

Evolution as related to Ethics

[1] See on this subject Von Oettingen's *Moralstatistik*, Abschn. 3, c. 3.

inquiry itself will show how far the conceptions of organic life are applicable to ethics; but the question of whether man and his morality are derived from some lower form of life does not fall within its scope. It is properly a question of first principles, and does not belong to ethics itself. Most persons are evolutionists up to a certain point, and for my own part the idea that there is a continuous progression in things, so that if exceptions are claimed, the burden of proof lies with the claimant, appears to be very much in the position of such a sentiment as toleration, which has rendered itself indispensable to the mind. But we need not bring the idea with us to ethics, and except in this negative sense it will not be employed. Here again, it may be repeated, the description of morality must itself show how far the general principle of evolution applies to it. Moreover, evolution is not a fixed theory, not a word to conjure with, and it may be modified and is being modified every day; and it is a question whether morality may not throw light on the development of the lower world, quite as much as that development may throw light upon morality. Supposing morality follows the general law, that law may at any rate be traced here in a more familiar subject. If the independent inquiry into ethical conceptions bears out the biological analogy, it will only be so much clear gain to the theory of evolution, because it will rest upon no preconception.

13. One further remark may be added in anticipation of the inquiry itself. Two great features of convergence in present ethics were noticed, the objectivity of treatment, and the conception of an organic coherence of the individual with society, so that morality is social at the same time that society is moral. Now these two features characterise Greek ethics in its prime; and it is not merely fanciful to recognise in the practical movements I have described a blending with the more distinctively modern feeling of human personality, of that cheerful public service on the one hand, and solicitude of the State for the welfare of

its members on the other, which seem to mark Greek life before its disruption, and are reflected in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. It will accordingly not be surprising if an examination of ethical ideas at the present time should lead to results resembling those of the Greek thinkers, and especially of Aristotle, the most nearly allied of all ancient thinkers to that mode of thought which is characteristic of the present day.

III.—Division of the Subject.

14. Our object being to describe the nature of morality by analysing the conceptions used in the moral judgment, the bulk of the study will therefore fall into two divisions, according as we analyse the conceptions which relate to the existence of the moral judgment, or those which are connected with its growth, maintenance, and change. The former part of the inquiry deals with the statics of morality, for we simply take morality as it is given and ask what is implied in its being morality, to what facts, for instance, the central conceptions of good or right and of obligation correspond. The latter division is dynamical, for it investigates the operation of the forces by which the distinction of good and bad grows and varies. But there is a third division of the subject preliminary to both the others, but more closely connected with the statical examination of morality. Take any moral judgment, and two questions immediately arise: the first and most important is what is meant by goodness: the second is what is it that we call good. The answer to the first analyses the predicates of the moral judgment; the answer to the second analyses its subject; and though the two questions cannot be kept completely apart, they can be so treated for scientific purposes. Our inquiry will therefore fall into three parts which correspond to the three problems:—(1.) What is it that is good? (2.) Why is it good, or what does its goodness mean? (3.) How does

goodness come into being, how is it maintained, how does it advance?

15. Book I. will deal with the preliminary questions raised by the *subject* of moral judgments. We have here to make no assumptions as to the meaning of good and bad, but, taking from ordinary experience the application of these and other predicates, to define to what it is they apply. We are not at liberty to lay down dogmatically with Kant that what is good is the good will, but must test this statement by our data. The conceptions of *conduct* and *character* fall under this division to be analysed. The analysis of them consists in a description of the different elements they contain, as a preliminary to the more strictly ethical questions which depend upon them. As such an investigation will borrow largely from psychology, it is right here to observe that for ethical purposes the same completeness of treatment is not demanded as would be necessary to satisfy a psychologist proper.

Some of the conceptions connected with conduct, such as that of the *value* of conduct, will be found to raise conveniently the question of the relation of ethics to other sciences, to natural science, to psychology, and to metaphysics. The character of a science is bound up with the nature of its subject-matter, and though conduct is only one part of the subject of ethics, its treatment offers hints for the treatment of the whole. Nothing illustrates this truth of the connection of method with facts better than the common habit we have of describing things in terms of the science which treats of them, though of course their qualities are independent of our discovery of them. Thus we speak of 'the economic forces of society,' meaning not anything which depends on the science of economics, but the actual forces which regulate the growth, distribution, and consumption of wealth. Many other instances occur to the mind, such as 'the psychological conditions of action,' 'the geological structure of strata,' 'the chemical composition of a substance,' in all of which we attach epithets to

things in order to indicate properties that existed before these epithets could have a meaning. It may be added that in discussing the method of ethics in connection with the elements of moral action, we shall avoid the danger (always present to the treatment of scientific method) of vagueness and abstraction, because we shall be defining the science by the character of its own facts.

16. Ethics proper begins with analysing the conceptions of good and bad, right and wrong, which are the nerve of moral judgments, and the various conceptions connected with these. This will occupy the first part of Book II., and the investigation will take the form of an inquiry into the vital question of the relation between the individual and society. The second part deals with the supreme end of conduct, which stands in close relation with the preceding problem. Under this second division will be included such conceptions as that of the common good, self-sacrifice, perfection, happiness. Finally, there will remain to be discussed the principles upon which a systematic treatment of the contents of morality may be based. All these conceptions I group together under the head of *moral order*, because the inquiry will show that the idea of good or right implies nothing more than an adjustment of parts in an orderly whole, which in the individual represents an equilibrium of different powers, in the society an equilibrium of different persons.

In Book III. I group under the title of *growth* and *progress* the conceptions which comprehend the maintenance and development of morality. It is not necessary to repeat that by the growth of morality I do not mean the connection of morality with lower forms of conduct in the animals. On the contrary, assuming a given state of moral observances, my concern is to show how the human forces operate which produce it. The data which fall under this head are not extrinsic to morality, but are vitally bound up with the very existence of morality. Thus progress, the most important of the dynamical con-

ceptions, will be found to be involved in all morality. But these conceptions, though they are used in our judgments about morality, do not stand on the same footing as the statical, just because they represent morality in motion rather than in repose. Some of them are the conceptions of the previous book reappearing under a new aspect. Thus instead of explaining what good and bad mean, we have to describe the facts which mark the *distinction* of good from bad. Instead of duty we have in this sphere the notions of punishment and responsibility, which describe not what morality is, but how it is maintained. Now just as the statical conceptions attach to a central principle, so these others will be found to be involved in a single dynamical law. It will be found that moral ideals move by a process which, allowing for differences, repeats the law by which natural species develop, and of this process the dynamical conceptions represent different elements.

BOOK I

PRELIMINARY—CONDUCT AND CHARACTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE SUBJECT OF MORAL JUDGMENTS.

I.—The Will.

1. Moral epithets, whether of approval or disapproval, are commonly regarded as applying to voluntary actions or willed conduct. But this simple statement raises difficulties as soon as it is submitted to reflection. It depends on the definition of voluntary action how far we can accept it as covering the area of moral ideas: or again it may be held that other things are morally judged besides volition: or lastly, that volition itself is not the direct subject of the judgment, but something else, such as acts or motives. In the following two chapters I shall therefore endeavour to describe the various elements in willed conduct in their relation to one another: prosecuting the analysis only with reference to the ethical question, and with the twofold purpose of fixing the region within which moral predicates apply, and at the same time explaining the nature of the subject to which they apply.

2. I will begin by marking off the position of the will from the other mental phenomena to which it is most closely related. The will is practical or is a kind of action, and it may be distinguished therefore from the acts called impulsive or instinctive. On the other hand,

it is intimately connected with desire, which it succeeds in the order of complexity. With impulsive actions every one is familiar. They are, however, not the lowest of human actions. Lowest of all stand mere automatic actions, such as those of respiration, and next above these reflex actions, of which the expansion and contraction of the iris afford instances. Reflexes are unlike automatic actions in being dependent on some external stimulus, but they are like them in being unaccompanied by consciousness. They are best illustrated in the animals by motions which go on when the organs of consciousness are removed. Instinctive or impulsive actions differ from these in being accompanied by consciousness. They appear to be simple discharges of feeling in the form of movement, but they vary in complexity according to the nature of the stimulus which excites this feeling in the first instance. Sometimes indeed a vague internal feeling, such as the feeling of hunger, is sufficient to cause action, but it is indeterminate, as in the groping of a hungry dog for food. The action becomes determinate only when a particular piece of food is perceived. The impulse of the infant to suck, and the impulse of sex, exist first only as vague internal promptings, which when excited by an appropriate object issue in action directed to the enjoyment of that object. In some cases, as in jumping for joy, the connection of the act with the object which causes the feeling is obscure: in others, as in clenching the fist with anger, the connection is more definite. The instincts become more and more complex as ideas derived from past experience combine with the perception of the object. Still, in all such cases the process seems to be a direct excitement of the impulse by the object and the subsequent discharge in action. The whole question of the part played by ideas in instinctive action is a very difficult one. It is possible even that the idea of the end to be attained may be present; but there is nothing to show that such an idea is more than the remembrance of a past enjoyment, and in any case the

idea of the end is not present *as* an idea, that is to say, in distinction from the perception of the object.

Now it is this which distinguishes voluntary from instinctive action. A voluntary action is not a mere discharge of a feeling which is excited by the perception of an object, but it implies that the idea of the end to be attained is present not merely *in* consciousness, but *to* consciousness. Compare, for instance, a man's will to eat food with the instinctive effort made to seize it either by a man himself, or let us say by a hungry dog. In the latter case, the mere sight of the food sets up through the impulse the action directed towards enjoying it: in the former, the enjoyment of the food is held before the mind in distinction alike from the perception of the food itself and the internal feeling of hunger. In certain cases it may be difficult to determine whether the act is really voluntary or only instinctive. But when a man wills he does not merely perform an act which issues in a certain end, but has before him the idea of the end, or is conscious of his object, or in homely language knows what he is doing, though he need not reflect upon what he is doing.

3. The presence of an idea in explicit form or in distinction from feeling, which is involved in volition, does not, however, serve to define the will. It is true not only of intellectual processes but also of desire. From desire, on the other hand, will differs in that whereas in desire the object present as an idea remains an idea or representation, in will it is converted into the actual reality of presentation. This distinction may be explained thus.

In desire we have always an idea, as, for instance, of warmth or of eating food: the process of desire is the effort to convert this idea from a mere representation to a reality. This idea is present as an idea. The agent, besides having the idea, is in a certain present condition (say of cold or hunger), and while his present condition is painful the idea before his mind is pleasant. Desire consists in a feeling of tension which may be described as

a sense of disparity between the ideal object and the actual state of the agent. This actual state either already contains pain, or the suggested idea induces a pain, as when I am perfectly contented, but the suggestion of a greater happiness renders me uneasy. The tension of desire is felt as the contrast between the pain of want and the pleasure of the idea.[1] The tension itself arises from the resistance which the present or actual state of the agent offers to the tendency of the idea to work itself out into reality. That such a tendency exists, though it is confined within certain limits,[2] is attested by many familiar facts. Persons who dwell long enough on the idea of throwing themselves from a height end by actually doing so; long brooding over the idea of an act which may be repugnant to a man's moral sense may in the end lead him to commit the wrong[3]—"the woman who deliberates is lost;" by dwelling on the idea of a disease persons

[1] Whether the phrase a "feeling of tension" is a sufficient description of desire is a difficult psychological question. See on this subject Volkmann's *Psychologie*, § 143; and on the other side Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, Essay VII. p. 239; and *Mind*, vol. xiii. pp. 15–17. Great difficulty is offered by the phenomenon of expectation, which would appear to involve a tension, but yet cannot properly be called desire. So far as I can judge, the case seems to be thus:—Tension is a term very loosely employed. Sometimes a feeling like that of headache may be described as a feeling of tension, when the feeling recalls a physical strain. Sometimes we have a state of mind which to the observer might appear as a tension, but is not felt so by the patient. Simple expectation is of this kind. If I am expecting, say, that it will rain, or the appearance of a class-list, my idea is that of something which is to happen in the future, and the content of this idea need not be incompatible with my present feelings, and suggests no contrast. The person who observes the idea as a mental event may see that it does not agree with the rest of my mind, and may describe the state as one of tension; but the patient feels this not as a tension but as the feeling of pain. When the tension is felt as such the expectation is already becoming desire, as it is perpetually on the point of becoming. Thus expectation as such is not desire, but then neither is mere expectation a *feeling* of tension. This feeling seems to involve the contrast of pleasure and pain as stated in the text.

[2] See Prof. Bain's *Emotions and Will*, p. 427 (3rd ed.), where he quotes the well-known lines:—

> "O who can hold a fire in his hand
> By thinking on the frosty Caucasus,
> Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
> By bare imagination of a feast?"

[3] A motive used in Dostoievsky's remarkable psychological study *Crime et Châtiment*.

can put themselves in conditions favourable for its actual appearance. Acts which are done by hypnotic patients at the suggestion of the operator afford other instances. While in any one desire we have this process and feeling of tension, in a conflict of desires there are two incipient motions, each of them resisted by that part of the subject's feelings or present state to which the motive makes appeal.

4. Some further remarks are needed mainly in reference to the terminology of desire. Confusion often arises from the loose application of the name of one element to another. Thus the *motive* means either the feeling which impels to action or the idea before the mind. But the principal difficulty arises as to the *object* of desire. The object, in the first place, is never a mere external thing. When I desire a fruit which is before me, I desire not the fruit itself but its enjoyment; when a child desires the moon he wants to possess it. The object of desire seems always to be a state of my mind which in desiring exists as an idea, in the satisfaction as a reality. Herein it differs from the object of knowledge; for waiving any ultimate question, the object of knowledge is not present in the state of knowledge itself, but is outside or beyond it. The idea before my mind in desire is defined as simply that of which the satisfaction is the reality. It does not mean a constructive image of the satisfaction, though in developed desires such image is a part of the idea. The idea is in fact more largely derived from memory. But both idea and satisfaction have a common character, or as it is called technically, content. Hence the satisfaction is desired only so far as the idea has the same character, and conversely my desire is satisfied only so far as the result has the same character as my idea, and this is why desire is so rarely satisfied. On account of their common character both the idea and the satisfaction are described as the object of desire, and again the term *end* is applied indifferently to both. If we are to distinguish them at all, we might call the idea the purpose, the satisfaction the end. Lastly, since every

desire strives to realise its ideal object, the desire itself, as a whole, is distinguished by the common character of purpose and end, which gives the desire its *content* or character.

5. To return to the main subject. In willing the resistance disappears and the idea passes into actual reality. I do not raise the question whether will is always preceded by desire, still less do I imply that will ensues only after a conflict of desires, or as a choice between objects. Though this is most often the case, it is not so always. There need be no more than one object before the mind. To suppose that in this case there is always present the alternative idea of omitting the action, is to confuse the state of the agent's own mind with the judgment of the observer, who can always say the agent might have done otherwise.

In some cases the idea passes into performance immediately; in others the conversion takes place by a process which may be roughly described as bringing the idea nearer and nearer to the feelings, or the actual state of the subject. The gulf between the idea of the object of volition and the present feelings of the agent is bridged over by the discovery of intermediate steps or means which must be adopted in order to the end. As these means are successively discovered they enter into the idea of the end before the mind, and the object thus becomes distributed over them as well. It may even often happen that the means become the object to the exclusion of the ultimate end. When in this process of discovering means something is reached the idea of which can pass at once into the state of actual feeling, the conditions of willing are complete, and the act ensues, all the parts of the idea before the mind pass into reality, beginning with the ultimate means. Sometimes when the means are found impossible, and the action is abandoned, the end remains in view as the object of a *wish;* sometimes the actual performance is deferred, and the will takes the form of a mere *resolution.*[1]

In this process two things seem to be involved. The

[1] See Volkmann, *Lehrbuch der Psych.*, § 147.

first is that the idea of the object becomes more vivid: instead of remaining a faint idea it acquires, at least in certain portions, the strength of feeling, that is of that state which is required in order to set going the activity (whether internal or external) which is willed. In the second place, the idea of the object acquires a further detail. The object present to consciousness never can be the whole particularity of the act, but a more or less generalised or ideal form of it. But before the analysis into means takes place, the idea before my mind contains very little detail: in order that it should be willed its content must become adequate to the whole event contemplated. These details are supplied by the means which are the conditions under which the act is to be performed. As they are recognised the idea of the particular act becomes more concrete and individual, though in the process the ultimate results may fade out of sight in comparison with the nearer means. The passage into volition implies both these processes of acquiring greater detail in the content of the idea and greater vividness in the idea itself (at least in some parts of it). Whether the two things are identical I will not inquire, but in both senses it can be said that a little imagination may take a man far away from reality, while a little more brings him back again.

It is then the peculiar character of volition that in it the consciousness of its object is transformed into actual possession: the idea of the object entering more and more accurately into the details of reality is transformed so as to combine with the mass of present feelings in the subject, and to issue in the psychical event of volition. Volition is therefore a true creator: it gives reality to something which before was a mere idea. A mere idea is indeed a fact of mind as much as a feeling, and in that sense real; but in volition the idea which at the beginning is discrepant from the mental presentations is transformed into an actual presentation.[1]

[1] In order not to complicate the statement, I have in the above taken

II.—Right and Perfect.

6. Is then the subject of moral judgment always a volition? The question is a double one. Is what is morally judged always a volition? Does it always imply that consciousness of its object by which volition is characterised? The further question whether will is directly or only indirectly judged need not engage us at present, for it does not concern the inquiry at what stage moral judgments begin to emerge. To both the questions stated the answer might seem at first to be negative. Moral judgments seem to be passed on other mental states than volition, and there are some acts which are thought to reveal character and yet cannot be called conscious acts. A consideration of the case will, however, show that what is morally good or bad is always the will.

7. A distinction which will throw light upon these cases may be stated here at the outset. It will be constantly recurring under other forms. Good and bad are terms which have a wide application, and they are not confined to morals, but extend to all objects of nature and art. In general a thing is called good in reference to a particular purpose when it is adapted to fulfil that purpose, or conforms to the type or ideal in question. A good horse is one which has the qualities of a horse in an eminent degree: a good poem is one which effects its artistic purpose whatever that may be: a good style is one which is adapted to the subject it describes. We are concerned only with the use of the terms in morals. Now within morals the antithesis of good and bad is used to cover both that of right and wrong and that of perfect and imperfect or high and low. These ideas cannot be precisely defined in this place, but they refer to certain obvious facts. We

the common case where the will converts a representation into a presentation. But of course there are cases (comparatively rare) where the object is the idea of an idea, and the will makes the second idea a reality: as when I will to bring an idea before my mind.

distinguish between a man who is good and such a man as we might wish to be if we had the choice. We might wish to be as perfect in wisdom as Solomon, but we may be good with a lower degree of wisdom. There are differences between persons consisting in natural gifts or possessions. But it is not the possession of qualities which makes goodness, but the use to which they are put. There are certain things which we must accept as facts, and make the best of; and we do not consider a man less good because he cannot do as much as a more gifted person. One man may have much money and another little, but they may be equally generous, though perhaps not equally enviable. One man may have a store of sympathy, and another may be hard; but the latter can by proper exertion be as good as the former, though we may think him a less perfect man. Take any man and you find that he has certain advantages and disadvantages, certain things happen to him and others do not; and you find also that he makes a certain use of these facts. Now good and bad are properly applied to the use a man makes of himself, but they are used to cover also his qualities, his advantages and disadvantages. For instance, the same degree or kind of courage is not required from a man of nervous temperament and feeble body as from a robust and healthy man: the former may be exempted from a military service which is otherwise universal, and yet not forfeit respect. He simply is a less complete individual, but his imperfection depends on something which is merely given, and has to be accepted. Yet we should be reluctant to give him the moral approval conveyed by the epithet "brave"—in the eyes of some he might appear a coward. Every one is conscious how difficult it is to keep apart the pity we feel for an unfortunate person from the moral feeling of contempt. Conversely we often call a man brave who has nothing but physical courage, and who shows pluck even in a bad cause. The parties in a political question have done their duty when they have honestly formed their

conviction as to what policy will be most beneficial. Their difference depends on the different bent of their minds which they cannot control. But though both may be doing rightly, they almost always stigmatise each other with the strongest epithets of moral condemnation.

8. Take first the cases where we apply the epithets good and bad not to will, but to other mental phenomena; to feelings, emotions, or desires. We often say that it is right to feel a certain feeling, and in some cases a feeling may mark the extent of our obligation. When we see a person in distress, and from our own poverty or occupation are unable to relieve him, we approve the feeling of pity or sympathy. Again, the simple feeling of gratitude for a service is a duty which does not necessarily imply our doing any service in return. A wish again, like the wish of Nero, that all the Romans had but one head, may be wicked. One of the direct effects of Christianity has been to attach a moral value to mere desires, even if they find no outlet in action; and—a still more striking instance—even to thoughts.

Now construed strictly all these cases illustrate the distinction drawn. Feelings and desires and thoughts occur to a person, and they are given as natural facts, and are in themselves purely neutral. The only exception is where their presence is due to our own fault, and they are therefore praised or blamed because they are due to previous virtuous or vicious action. Otherwise their goodness or badness is simply their tendency to further or retard morality, the occurrence of them giving an advantage or disadvantage in view of this object. But in reality when they are approved or condemned in the strict moral sense it is as being the objects of the will. A thought can be neither moral nor immoral, but only the act of retaining it in consciousness when its character has been attended to.[1] It is

[1] "'All sorts of thoughts cross one's mind: it depends upon whether one gives them harbour and encouragement,' said Molly. 'My dear' [said Mrs. Gibson], 'if you must have the last word, don't let it be a truism.'"—Mrs. Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*.

idle to praise a feeling which cannot be commanded: what is praised is its indulgence or its cultivation. The feeling of sympathy may be present as the outflow from a sympathetic temperament, and while it may win affection, it will not deserve praise: or again, it may be nothing more than that extension of the parental feeling which seems to be possessed by animals as well as men. There is the well-known story quoted by Darwin of the heroic baboon.[1] A German writer saw in the Zoological Garden at Leipzig a gorilla which had herself maltreated a young newcomer with revolting cruelty take pity on it at last, and defend it against the other occupants of the cage;[2] yet, though there are here the materials for morality, no one would think of calling this animal moral. Take again the case of desire for drink, or for more drink, for which a man is responsible only in so far as he is responsible for the acts which have led to the excessive desire. We blame him for the desire only when he persists in it or encourages it, and he does this by making the desire itself the object of his will. This may appear merely a roundabout way of saying that the desire becomes a will; but in fact it continues a desire without any resolution to take drink. The analogy of feelings and thoughts is enough to show that there really is volition involved in the retention of desire; and if this were not enough we need only turn to the negative instances from which, in ethics as elsewhere truth, according to the saying of Bacon, may often be most easily elicited. In the prohibition of a desire what is commanded is the deliberate rejection of the intemperate desire, and this is an act of will, which doubtless rejects the desire by substituting the idea of another and different object. To take a further illustration, even a perception may be condemned, but the object of censure is not the act of *seeing*, but that of *looking*. The sight may be accidental, but to prolong it is deliberate, and may be wrong.

[1] Darwin, *Descent of Man*, p. 101, ed. ii.
[2] G. H. Schneider, *Der thierische Wille*, p. 356.

Thus all the lower psychical activities may enter into the object of volition, and it is as such that they are morally judged. Primitive times confuse these two points of view, and hold a person equally responsible for an accident which occurs to him, and for an act of which the agent is aware. Actæon is punished for having seen Diana, Œdipus holds himself guilty of an act which indeed he committed, but not knowing its real nature. Conversely guilt is supposed to be explained satisfactorily by alleging the mental condition of the agent, as when Agamemnon apologises for carrying off Briseis by saying he was distracted.[1] But instances of the same primitive obscurity of ideas may be found every day amongst ourselves.

III.—Morality and Consciousness.

9. The difficulties of the subject of consciousness are partly met by the same view. In affirming that all moral action (action which is morally judged) is conscious of its object, I affirm nothing more than that the agent apprehends the nature of his object. It is not implied that he reflects about it and thinks of the character of the object as a reason for willing it, still less that he thinks of it in relation to the rest of his life, or as right or wrong. It is a mere reassertion of the ordinary notion that to be responsible you must have knowledge. I will take the cases of difficulty in turn.

(1.) There are acts done under the influence of violent feeling and without any knowledge of what is done. Under circumstances of great danger, as when a pistol is presented at me, I may swerve aside. Such an act would be purely impulsive; yet it is alleged that a man's character is shown by such an act, and in general it is under great trials that a man's character is most visible. Yet these are just the cases when the consciousness required for volition seems to be absent.

[1] I borrow the illustration from *Ecce Homo.*

Now we must of course distinguish between cases when a man is not really aware of his action and other similar cases. It is true that a man's moral value is shown under new and unexpected circumstances, but it is a mistake to suppose that the act is always half unconscious. For the most part it follows upon a rapid survey of the conditions, and we admire the highest of such actions because of the strength and originality of character shown in this quick resolution. "Everything," says Goethe, "the noble man may perform who understands and seizes quickly."[1] Such acts seem unconscious because they reveal powers which the agent himself and the spectator had not suspected before; his act comes to him as a kind of surprise. But they are really acts of volition, and of volition at its highest power.

On the other hand, where the act is really instinctive, and it was impossible for the person to know what he was doing, we do not condemn. We should condemn only if he was answerable for his weakness, or if the conditions both of the event and of his own nature were not such as to prevent his knowing, in which case his act is taken as evidence that he deliberately did wrong. Otherwise we say his act was only natural, and though a stronger man might not have swerved, we do not blame the weaker, but if anything are only sorry for him. His act does indeed show his character, but not in the same sense as before: it shows that his natural powers are limited, or that he is lacking in bodily strength or in nervous fibre: it exhibits that part of him which is natural or given.

10. (2.) Acts in which we know the right and do the wrong offer great difficulties to the psychologist, but they need not detain us here. They are in general deliberate; though when we are said to do wrong deliberately while knowing the right, it is not implied that we do the wrong because it is wrong.

[1] "Alles kann der Edle leisten
Der versteht und rasch ergreift."—*Faust.*

On the other hand, there are certain cases where a person is aware of his act and does it, and yet he is not morally condemned. Here there is consciousness but no moral judgment. But then there is also no volition. Just as when our heart is set upon doing something, anxiety to succeed may make us do the opposite, so conversely we may do the thing which we hate in a fit of what is really insanity. Some acts done in popular panics might come under this description. They would be condemned only if the person is responsible for his condition; but otherwise he may plead *force majeure:* he did not will the act, because the act was not produced by the idea before his mind, but by the intruding passion.[1]

11. (3.) I may pass on to instances of habitual action which are certainly morally judged, but have the appearance of being unconscious. The force of association may make certain habits really mechanical. Supposing I have been long in the habit of taking by right of precedence a particular chair in a room, when I enter the room after a time, though I may no longer possess the right, I may still walk to the chair and be guilty of a 'discourtesy.' Such discourtesy would be excused as involuntary.[2] Now it might be held that many of our routine actions are of this character; for instance, the action of dressing when I rise in the morning, though certainly a duty, seems no more volitional than the act of a cat which cleans her face when she wakes. And very often the process goes on as we say unconsciously. Byron says he composed *Lara* while dressing. But in the first place it is not necessary that we should consciously exert our will through every step of a long process: it is sufficient to will the beginning. And again, so far as I can trust my own experience, there is always the idea of something to be done before my

[1] In the above I have derived help from Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, pp. 41, 42; and *Mind*, xiii. p. 31.

[2] Unless of course the person ought to have foreseen such a case and guarded against the habit.

mind, *e.g.*, the act of going to the water, which is distinct from my present feeling. There is therefore volition, but the passage of the idea into reality is so rapid as to be really immediate.

The same is true of all moral habits. They are habits of will, though from their sureness and uniformity they resemble instincts. It is only the illusory mysteriousness and arbitrariness which we associate with the will which incline us to the belief that such habits are not volition. If they were really instincts, if at the mere perception of distress I mechanically put my hand into my pocket to bestow money, I should be regarded not as a moral agent but as a mere automaton. Though it is the object of education to create habits of action, it is more important still that these habits should not become instincts, and should not lose their freedom and self-control. Such mechanical habits are more likely to lead to evil than to good, and if they were real instincts, then the good results to which they might lead would be only accidentally good. We should set them down to the person's credit not on their own account, but as before on account of the acts which led him to such a state of mind.

12. (4.) Lastly, acts of simple omission require to be mentioned here. It might seem as if such an act was culpable not because it willed the bad, but only because it did *not* will the good—not a volition but the absence of a volition. But the phrase 'an act of omission' is a mere negative description, and represents a mode under which we think of the case for a particular purpose. A negative proposition is merely subjective, and depends upon something positive in the thing described. Similarly an act of omission is bad not because the person did not do something, but because he did something else, or was in such a state that he did not do what was required. In the former case his act was willed; in the latter case either he deliberately remained inactive and therefore willed, or was in such a condition that he could not will, and

is condemned for the acts which brought him into that condition.

Thus whenever moral judgment is passed it is passed upon will, as will has been here defined, or else on the ground of acts of will (and it may be noticed that the reservation applies only to cases where censure is passed, and not approbation). The converse proposition that all volition is morally judged cannot be established till we have learnt more of the nature of willed conduct, which it will be the object of the next chapter to explain.

CHAPTER II.

CONDUCT AND CHARACTER.

I.—External Action.

1. Morality which has been thus exhibited as right volition is described also as right action or right conduct. The name conduct is usually employed with a covert reference to the outcome of will in external action, and we have to ask the relation of mere outward action to conduct. But, besides this, conduct has an inner source in feeling and an outward result in its consequences, and its precise connection with these is of essential importance for ethics. It will be shown that the real moral fact is conduct itself regarded as a whole of many elements, and that actions, consequences, and internal feelings have value for morality only in so far as they are elements of this fact.

2. External action (to begin with this) concerns conduct only in so far as the object of certain volitions is derived from this source. In general the object of volition is, as with desire, some state of my mind, which being ideal at first, is realised by the volition itself. How much of the means to the end is included in the statement of the object is mainly an arbitrary matter of language, but strictly the object of any volition is the end or ultimate result itself. This object is some state of my mind which directly or indirectly is regarded as one which can be brought about. Here it differs from the object of desire, which may be for a simple feeling like warmth without any idea of its production. Hence when the object of

will is described as some passive state, as when I determine to be in London, it always implies some action of which that state is the result; and where no such implication is conveyed (as if I were to say I will warmth), the state cannot with propriety be called the object of the will. It may be added that the character or content of the will is the character or content of its object.

Now the will may derive its object from any source: it is not confined to external action, but can, as we have seen, take its object from any of the lower mental states, from emotions, from thoughts, from desires. In all these cases the object of the will is not the emotion or thought itself, but some idea connected with it, as, *e.g.*, its suppression. We may even derive the object from volition itself, willing to produce the conditions which evoke volition, as when we speak with the pessimist of suppressing the will to live, or determine that we will make up our minds. This does not of course mean that the will can will itself; we do not will our will any more than we desire our desire, or feel our feeling. We should in that case be making the process of willing its own object, or in so far as we do not commit that error, we simply assert the tautology that the will is a will and not something else.

3. The will may thus remain entirely internal, and be no less conduct. Conversely, when the will issues in external action it is no less an internal event. External conduct differs from other conduct only in the source from which the object is taken. The mere external motion stands to the whole object of the will in the same relation as a thought does when I will to evoke it. In willing an external action, the object is the state of mind which we call by the name of the action, and is the psychical side of a certain set of bodily motions. When I will to go to London my object is the state of mind I am in when going to London. When the object is called the idea of the motion, this is a shorthand expression for the object as described. The mere physical movement of the body is

not the object of the will, though the idea of it may in some cases enter into the object; just as upon occasion the idea of how his muscles work in the motion may be present to the mind of an anatomist who is as familiar with their working as we are with our outward motions.

When the volition takes place, the state of mind in which the idea becomes real is, to use a metaphor, prolonged into the outer world in the form of the external motion.[1] If we are thinking of outward conduct along with other conduct it is thus not paradoxical to say that the outward motion is accidental. Hence whether the motion ensues or is prevented, the conduct, the willed act, remains the same as before. I may stretch out my hand to save a person from falling, or in the act of doing so I may be struck senseless by a blow from behind. In either case my conduct is equally good.

Thus conduct, though external, is always a state of mind, and it is different from a mere outward act. When we speak of morality as acts or actions, we understand those words as equivalent to conduct, and I shall therefore, where

[1] In describing the outward action as a continuation of the mental state into the outward world I am using a metaphor. It is by no means asserted that the mental state is the cause of the action. There is in fact no proper continuity between the two. What is continuous with the motion is the central nervous process which is the physiological counterpart of the volition. The facts of action may be described otherwise thus. Directly or indirectly the original stimulus of action comes from something sensible, directly in mere sensations, indirectly and at all degrees of remove from sense in more ideal states. These suggestions become transformed into a mental event, or state of consciousness. In action of all kinds these mental states reissue through the mediation of the nerves into the world from which they came. But to explain how this process of give and take between the natural world and the mind is possible belongs to metaphysics. It is sufficient for our purpose to speak of the physiological process as the counterpart or correspondent of the mental state; but there need be no pretence that this phrase, though it seems to many minds entirely satisfactory, is any solution at all, or anything more than a very obvious statement of what is to be explained. So far as I can judge, the mental state and the nervous process are not simply correspondent but identical—the same thing in different relations. A thing *is* nothing but the ways in which it behaves to other things. The nervous process is the way in which a mental event behaves towards the physical world, the mental state is another part of the behaviour of the same thing, viz., its behaviour towards all those things which on account of this peculiar behaviour we call mental states.

the contrary is not indicated, employ them, in general, in this sense. The mere action follows the mental state irrespective of my mind: it is something given by the law of my constitution which I find before me. Hence the conduct is more even than an impulsive action, though that too begins with a feeling and ends with a movement. For on the one hand the mental state is the realisation of an idea which is derived from the action, and on the other hand the action issues from a feeling which contains the prevision of the action itself.

4. Conduct is sometimes separated from character, as will be illustrated in the following chapter. How far the separation is anything more than a carelessness of expression it is difficult to say, but it rests on confusing conduct with mere action. To imagine that action which is willed is separate from the character is an illusion, for which our inveterate habit of imagining that there is such a thing as will in general is largely answerable. We think of the will as a kind of fixed machinery, and on the other side of certain objects supplied to it, and we imagine the will taking up its objects in turn. But will is nothing but a common name given to certain modes called volition, in which the mind behaves under certain circumstances, and every volition is distinguished from every other by the nature of its object. Hence conduct and character are in reality identical. A good character cannot exist except in its conduct, nor are there any actions approved by morality which do not proceed from a character which wills them. It is true there is a distinction between acts which are only outwardly conformable and acts which are really moral, and I shall revert to the distinction. But acts which are merely conformable do not arise from no character at all. They arise from a very definite character, but it is not the same as the really moral character. Either, as in the case of the infant, it is only partially formed, or as in the grown man it is fully formed but not disinterested.

II.—Conduct and its Consequences.

5. Conduct then is something mental, which may have an external side. The mental act, or the volition regarded as the accomplishment of the process of willing, has both an inner and an outer aspect. It proceeds from certain feelings and it issues in certain consequences. Outward actions are merely one element in the consequences of conduct. I call the consequences the outer aspect of conduct, for the same reason as the feelings are its inner aspect. In reality as the will is the feeling discharging itself, so the consequences are part and parcel of the whole event called conduct. The pleasure of eating is part of the act of eating. Why consequences are distinguished from conduct is that in the first place there are nearer and remoter effects of conduct, and in the second place an act not only affects the agent, but goes on to produce results upon others. Consequences are called the outer aspect of conduct for these reasons, and not because they are something out of relation to the mind; some acts, as for instance the cultivation of the mind, may have no consequences which are not contained in the agent's mind itself.

6. The distinction of conduct from its consequences is therefore indispensable. But this distinction does not mean separation. When conduct is separated from its consequences in ethical theories the separation appears in different forms. In general the effects of an action are identified with the pleasures and pains which ensue upon action. Sometimes the consequences are regarded quite vaguely as forming the ground of moral distinction when the appeal to motive fails.[1] I bring the question into close neighbourhood with that of external acts because this sharp separation of conduct from its consequences (at any rate when the latter are thought equivalent to pleasure and pain) seems largely to depend on a tacit identification

[1] *E.g.*, Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, ii. pp. 203, 218, 226, 255-6.

of conduct and outward action. The mechanical elements of conduct are certainly different from the consciousness which is said to be their result. Pleasure therefore seems to exist apart from the conduct, but it would not appear to do so if it were remembered that conduct need have no external side at all.

Now the question whether or not we judge an act to be right for its consequences does not concern us here. We are asking what is the subject of moral judgment, and no one pretends that the effects of an action are themselves morally judged, but only that they are the grounds for passing the judgment. But I can prepare the way for the ultimate question by pointing out that so far as consequences form an element in moral judgments (and they do not when they could not have been foreseen) they affect the character of the conduct or act which is the real subject of the judgment.

7. This arises from the nature of conduct itself as the accomplishment of an idea. The consequences alter the act because they alter the idea before the mind. They do not alter the external action: if I put out my fist the movement is the same whether I knock a person down with it or strike the air in stretching. Hence a merely animal action is the same, no matter what its consequences are: these make it a different action only to the spectator. But a man is agent and spectator in one. Hence though the outward action may be the same the conduct differs. Giving money to a man to start him in business is not the same thing as giving it to him to spend in drink. When therefore we condemn a person for consequences which he ought to have foreseen, we condemn not on account of the consequences in contrast to the action itself, but because his act was not the act required. Having in view all the circumstances of the case, he ought to have done a different act. In this sense all moral judgments regard consequences, for the results to which an act leads are part of its contents, and alter the object which is willed,

though of course all the details of an action need not be present in a picture to the agent's mind, but may be summed up or symbolised by a mere note or mark in the idea before the mind. Conduct is therefore so far from being really separable from its consequences, that it is of different character according to its consequences.

This statement indicates where the significance of the controversy about consequences really lies. Granted that the consequences affect the moral judgment, as being a part of the action willed, the question which remains to be solved is what kind of consequences they are of which morality does take account. There can be no doubt that in estimating right and wrong we consider the consequences of an act; what is of real interest is the question whether the consequences so regarded are simply pleasures and pains, or effects upon moral character.[1]

III.—Motives and Moral Sentiments.

8. The internal side of conduct, the feelings or emotions from which it issues, or these feelings as represented in idea, are the *moral sentiments*, or to call them by a neutral name, the active sentiments. As ordinarily enumerated, the sentiments of gratitude, generosity, and the like represent generalisations of the special sentiments of individual cases, in the same way as the civic duty generalises under a common name many different particulars of conduct. Given the sentiments, therefore, the corresponding conduct follows, and they are morally judged because they are equivalent to conduct. But the moral sentiment or feeling from which an act is done is not a simple impulse like that of hunger, which makes an animal go in quest of food, but is directed towards some object, or qualified by the idea of its object. The force of this description may be seen by contrasting moral sentiments with motives.

[1] See later, Book II., Part II., chap. v. sec. ii. p. 218.

9. An ambiguity has been already noticed in the term motive, which may mean either the idea which is the object of the action, or the feeling, impulse, or disposition which stimulates to action. When I say that my motive in writing a letter was to warn a friend of danger, I use motive in the former sense; when I say that it was from motives of ambition that I entered upon a certain office, I use it in the latter sense. Sometimes it implies both, but the latter sense is that which is intended when the motive is declared to be the subject of moral judgment. Motive means something which has propulsive force, whether a feeling or a passion. Taking motive then in this sense, it can be shown that it does not enter at all into moral action, except so far as it is absorbed into volition. It is the antecedent and cause of action, but it is not of itself moral, though it may become in certain cases indirectly the subject of moral judgments.

The motive or feeling may itself suggest the idea of the action—the feeling of hunger, for instance, suggests doubtless by association the idea of food, and impels to the quest after it. Or the feeling may be suggested by the actual sight of the object to which the action relates. Thus the sight of a man who has wronged me may make me so angry that I kill him. Or of course both causes may operate: while I am smarting from the wrong, my anger may suggest to me the idea of killing him, and the sight of him may increase the passion and impel me to the deed. Let us take the case of killing a man from anger or from hatred. Now the feeling itself does not effect the actual murder, but it intensifies the desire to kill, and it does so probably by removing from the mind all hindrances to the idea of killing, so that the latter becomes dominant, and the idea is made actual. The feeling from which the murder is performed is not the feeling of anger, but this feeling as affected by the idea of killing. This feeling towards killing, which is the active sentiment (a bad one), stands to the mere motive as the seeing eye to the dead

eye; it is the motive at work upon some object. Or to take another example, the sentiment of benevolence is different from the mere feeling of kindness, and modifies it by the idea of some benevolent act.

The process by which the volition is generated from the motive is of the following kind. The mind or self of the agent consists of a great and mostly inarticulate mass of feelings and ideas. A new feeling arises, say that of sympathy, with its accompanying idea of benevolent action. A process ensues, in which the pre-existent self is brought to bear upon these new elements. In the course of the process the latter may be modified so as to adapt themselves to the former, perhaps contracting their claims, while the self expands in its turn to receive them. In the end the idea of benevolence is accepted by a kind of coalescence with the self, and the feeling of sympathy, thus modified, and backed as it is by the whole self, constitutes the impulse to the benevolent action. The whole self is said to act from the motive of sympathy, because it acts in that direction. In reality this one feeling is not the explanation of the act, but is only the dominant aspect of the whole mass of mind as it wills. Thus the will would not have existed but for the motive, but the will is different from the motive. The motive feeling is thus either an antecedent of action, entering only into the whole mass of self which wills, and is therefore by itself not moral at all, or in so far as it suggests the action it is represented by the particular action adopted.

10. Thus it is not the motive which constitutes conduct, neither can motive be allowed to be that which morality directly judges.[1] An instance will suggest what the real position of motive in morality is. The moral

[1] The particular turn which has been given to this doctrine by Dr. Martineau, namely, that there is no motive which is absolutely good, but that the good motive is that one of two alternatives which the conscience commends as the relatively higher, is designed to meet the variation in the judgment passed upon the same motive according to circumstances. But this theory, though valuable in itself, does not touch the question in hand.

consciousness condemns anger when it leads to murder, but it does not condemn me if from indignation at a lie I angrily reprove the liar. It declares my reproof to be right, but yet at the same time it regards me as a less perfect character than if I had done the act without anger: the anger itself is condemned which was the motive, but the act is still approved. If we remember the double application of the predicate good, to what is right and to what is perfect, this indicates that the judgment of motive is again a case of the judgments which are applied to other things than will. When we judge motives as good or bad, we do so not because they are in themselves good or bad, but because they are the elements out of which is built the good or bad character, which is identical with good or bad actions. And thus morality deprecates anger because the irascible disposition tends to inflict pain upon others. In doing so it takes the pedagogic point of view, requiring that certain passions be restrained and others stimulated, because the actions which they suggest are detrimental or beneficial. But it never condemns the motive directly; hence if the same act is done from different motives it may approve them equally. I may give from a sense of duty what a warm-hearted man may give from sympathy. If I am naturally unsympathetic, my act may be thought more meritorious but certainly not better.

11. On the other hand, when the motive is morally judged, it is judged because it makes a difference to the action.[1] The description refers to the perplexing cases of acts which are done not simply out of mere conformity, but for some ulterior object, and not for their own sakes at all. When I do my duty from fear of the consequences, or from a wish to get from it the reputation of being a respectable citizen, my motive is taken into account in the judgment which is passed upon me. But such a motive really

[1] This view coincides with that of Mill in a well-known passage of his *Utilitarianism*, p. 29.

affects the character of the action: for now I no longer relieve a distressed person for the sake of relieving him: my object is the advancing of my own reputation by means of an action which is outwardly good. The action before my mind is one of which the other act is only a portion, and it is not the same act as if it had been confined to the latter. Or, again, if I pay respect to the laws from fear, it is not the performance of certain actions which I will, but these actions regarded as connected with certain effects. In these cases in fact the motive feeling is induced by the contemplated idea itself, and the difference in the idea makes the act different.

12. It will help to elucidate the difference between moral sentiments and motives, and at the same time to show that it is only the former which are identical with conduct, if I point out a confusion into which it is possible to fall between moral sentiments and mere habits of feeling, which are merely aptitudes for morality, and therefore in the rank of motives or predisposing causes. The sentiments are sometimes regarded as superior to conduct for affording rules of life. Thus Mr. Stephen, one of whose great merits it is to have insisted on the real identity of character and conduct, observing that it is all one whether you prohibit certain acts or prohibit certain dispositions, adds that the latter is the more compendious method because of the variety of motives from which one and the same act may be done: thus a man may kill from hatred, or if he is a soldier from a sense of duty. Hence while to prohibit killing would be an insufficient statement, to prohibit hatred is simple and exhaustive. Now undoubtedly this is a convenient expression, and it is a good principle of education. To discourage hatred is to minimise a dangerous element. But hatred itself is neither moral nor immoral. It is needed, in the first place, to maintain the war against wrong-doing. In the next place, hatred of itself may or may not kill: the real antisocial or immoral sentiment is the feeling which aims at killing.

Kindness again may lead a man into benevolence and keep him from violence; but it may also lead him to foolishness. Hence if the sentiment is to correspond to right conduct, it must be qualified so that the rules of sentiment are as numerous as those of conduct. Thus kindness, and the sense of duty from which a soldier kills, stand upon the same footing; they are both motives, and only antecedents of action. But the real moral sentiments which are effective in the two cases are the kindness which we call respect for life (or more particularly, the respect for this particular life), and the feeling which impels to certain acts in war. These are the real moral sentiments, and are equivalent to moral action because they are the dominant characters of the mind at the moment of volition. But the mere kindness of feelings or absence of hatred, though a suitable goal of education, are not the effective sentiments, given which you are necessarily moral, but are only aptitudes for morality.

The difference may be illustrated from another sphere. By a scientific habit of mind we mean certain aptitudes or qualities, natural or acquired, such as accuracy in description or observation, acuteness in distinguishing, patience in investigation, impartiality in judgment, the power of grouping many facts under general ideas. But such a mind may be scientific in a merely formal sense, from lack of material it may produce no results. Scientific thought, on the other hand, means a body of knowledge existing in the mind, and held there in virtue of the capacities the mind possesses of assimilating it. Scientific thought is the scientific habit when it is effective. The latter corresponds to the moral sentiments regarded merely as aptitudes for morality; the former to the real sentiments which are effective in volition. Here we have an illustration of the naïveté which distinguishes the old Greek philosophy. Aristotle, unconscious of distinctions recognised by a later age, speaks of the actual possession of knowledge as a scientific habit (ἐπιστημονικὴ ἕξις).

IV.—CHARACTER.

13. Since then the sentiments rightly defined are equivalent to conduct, it follows that the mere possession of them must not be supposed to constitute the difference between intrinsic or internal and merely customary morality, as if customs were not as much a matter of sentiment as what is called the morality of the heart. All morality has its moral sentiments, and wherever it exists is equally a rule of conduct on one side and character on the other. The customs of savages are as much internal with them as our morality is with us. Their characters are moulded on the plan of obedience to their customs; and though the attitude towards life of a good Zulu may be different from that of a high-minded Englishman, his morality is none the less intrinsic, but only lower. The distinction is one of fact, of development. Savages lack originality and elasticity, and their lives are uniform. When great moral teachers have called men away from mere custom to the inward spirit of action, they have had the same kind of distinction in their mind. They have not pretended to create something different in kind from what existed before, but they have tried to awake characters sunk in sluggishness or stagnation to a freer and more spontaneous life. When they have put the spirit of the law above the letter, they have, in fact, endeavoured to introduce a new law which is more plastic, more sensitive to differences of circumstance and condition.

14. What then is included under the conception of character, which has been used provisionally more than once in the preceding discussion? As from a practical point of view the acquisition of moral character is the one thing necessary, so from the speculative point of view to understand it may be called the whole business of ethics. We cannot as yet say what makes the difference between good and bad character, but we can say what character itself is.

Conduct as a concrete whole has an inward element of sentiment and an outward element of action, and these are different on the one hand from mere given feelings, on the other from mere action, even such as we know in impulsive acts. Conduct is this unity of feeling and action in which mere feeling is modified by the idea of action, and mere action becomes a mental, or if we like, a spiritual thing. Character is simply that of which individual pieces of conduct are the manifestation: it is the force of which conduct is the expression, or the substance of which conduct is the attributes. Think of a man's conduct in relation to the mental conditions from which it proceeds, and you think of his character: think of his character as it produces results beyond these sentiments themselves, and you have conduct.

15. Conduct and character are thus the same thing facing different ways. If we want to know what a man's character is, we ask what he has done. Short of being equivalent to conduct, character sinks to the rank of what is merely *disposition* or temperament, which often goes by the same name. Here we have once more the distinction of what a man possesses from the use which he makes of it. At the risk of repetition I will illustrate it again. A man of irascible disposition is sometimes described as of irascible character. But his disposition comes up for moral judgment only according to the volitions in which it issues: as being irascible he may be a less pleasant person to live with, but he may be as good as another in whom nature has kindled no spark of anger. His moral character, on the other hand, is shown in the acts in which he brings the whole of himself to bear upon this particular inclination. Another instance will make the difference between these two notions of character clearer. A man of high aspirations without corresponding effort to realise them we describe as a man of amiable but weak character. It is because what he does springs from gentle and refined feelings that we look upon him as amiable: it is because some of his best impulses are never carried

out into conduct, never become acts of will, that we stigmatise him as morally weak. It is true that we may not be able to discover a man's character in its fulness from the acts he has performed, as when a young life is cut short which was believed to contain greater promise. But it is only on the ground of its past conduct that we can estimate its future capabilities: its promise is concluded from the peculiar features of those acts (acts, be it remembered, in which the whole man is concerned) which we have had the opportunity of observing.

Character, then, is not the same thing as disposition, but it is built upon it. In the moral character, therefore, all a man's tendencies gather themselves up, in the form of volition, for a single utterance; character is their product. But at the same time it is resoluble into all the lower elements. It depends on ideas, feelings, disposition, even upon physical constitution. We are familiar with the truth that the lower stages of existence are used up to form the material of the higher, which in their turn are resoluble into the lower again. Physical matter is the basis of organic life, organic life of mental. "The chemic lump arrives at the plant and grows; arrives at the quadruped and walks; arrives at the man and thinks" (Emerson). In the character the case is the same. Volition is explained by all the conditions on which it depends, and it sums them up in a single act, just as a multitude of ideas and their words may be contained within the compass of a single idea and word which is yet different from its components.

V.—Is any Conduct Neutral?

16. One more question remains to be answered. It has been shown that volition or conduct is always that which is morally judged. Can we say conversely that not only is all morality conduct, but that all conduct is moral, that is, either good or bad, right or wrong? To answer in the affirmative would be contrary to some current opinions, for

a large portion of our conduct is commonly regarded as either neutral or indifferent, or merely prudential. At the same time the line between indifferent and moral conduct is admittedly hard to draw, while morality often seems implicitly to be taking up new portions of conduct formerly indifferent. The subject is naturally attached to the discussion of motives, because mere outwardly good or conformable acts of will are treated as having no moral value, though at the same time it is often left ambiguous, whether we are therefore to regard them as immoral, or simply as so imperfectly formed as to be neither bad nor good, but simply neutral in respect of the agent's character. If so, this would contradict the theorem that every volition is good or bad. But though it is very difficult to get from the moral judgment a direct answer, both on account of the variety of cases, and of the complex nature of each, yet it is, I think, true to say that it condemns them and regards them as bad. Sometimes the verdict is obvious: If a man endows a useful popular institution in order to secure a seat in Parliament, his act is bad and corrupt, however great the service he renders. But to take another instance of what is commonly (though wrongly) called optional, or meritorious conduct. If he gives the money in order to make a display, we still say, though he has done a good act, it is not the act of a good man. Passing to obligatory acts the case becomes more perplexing. Acts which merely conform to strict duties may be either negative or positive. In the first case I abstain from wrong from a bad motive. But it would seem paradoxical to say I did wrong because from fear of the gallows I did not kill another, and yet we cannot say the act was good. Or take acts of positive legality. In speaking of these we must be careful to get behind the phrase. Conformity to law or custom, in which the act is done because it is law or custom, and for no other reason—a description which applies to a great part of ordinary respectable lives—is certainly declared to be good conduct. The acts spoken of here are mere legal acts which

are done from a low motive. I pay my debts rigidly, but I do it from fear of the bailiff. Is my act good or bad? On the one hand I obey the law; on the other hand my object is not to obey the law, but to secure my peace and quiet by doing legal duties. But here again we certainly deny the act to be good.

17. Now in all these cases the act is never neutral, but where denied to be good it is declared to be bad, and absolutely bad. The difficulty of recognising this is that we are apt to reason thus: If the act is bad, ought I then to have omitted it? If it is wrong to abstain from murder, ought I to have done the act? Or ought I not to pay my debts? But the alternative is wrongly stated. When I say it is wrong not to kill a man from fear of the gallows, I do not say that you ought to have killed him, but I say that you ought to have repressed the desire to kill him for its own sake: or again, you ought to pay your debts because you owed them; or be munificent, because that is the right use to make of your wealth. The act done was really not what it seems to be, but something else, securing the safety of your neck, or the free possession of your purse. Morality says you did something different from your duty and your act was bad, or it says your act was outwardly good, but you have a low ideal. It does indeed give credit for what is a good or useful quality in your act, *e.g.*, for your self-control, and consequently its condemnation is of all degrees of severity, and considering the effect of these elements of good character in the sum total of life, it may dislike to call you a bad man, though it refuses to call you a good one. It remembers that a man's character as a whole may be better than any one of his acts. But unless you aim at the ideal of conduct honestly, it maintains (making allowance, if necessary, for the circumstances) that you did wrong.

It may be asked, seeing that a man's motives never can be known, how then can you judge him? But this concerns the practical application of moral judgments. We

have to use a rough and ready method, taking advantage of the best knowledge we can get, but your act is none the less bad, because society is deluded and thinks you good. In the moral judgment everything which affects the nature of the act is supposed known, and it is because in practice this is impossible that we tend to throw the source of the moral enactment inwards into each one's conscience, and that morality keeps pointing to religion which leaves the ultimate judgment with God, "to whom all hearts are open." But, I repeat, the moral judgment is independent of our power of using it accurately. And if again it is answered that in fact we never do judge action in this stringent fashion, and that some of these volitions are really praised and their authors applauded, then we must insist that we are not merely concerned with what people as a matter of fact do, but with what they mean by passing the judgments that such and such acts are good or bad; and if when the motive is known the act is condemned, then it is no less bad when the motive is not known.

18. But it is with purely indifferent action that most doubt would be felt as to the truth of the proposition advanced. To quote some examples from Mr. Spencer, it is thought indifferent whether I walk to the waterfall to-day or ramble along the sea-shore;[1] or again, "as currently conceived, stirring the fire, or reading a newspaper, or eating a meal, are acts with which morality has no concern;"[2] and there are thousands of actions like these which seem at first sight indifferent. It is to be observed that such actions are not always called indifferent in quite the same sense: in the first case the indifference is between alternative ends, or alternative means to the same end; in the latter cases there is no question of an alternative, unless we suppose that in all moral action there is an alternative between doing and forbearing.[3] Mr. Spencer

[1] *Data of Ethics*, p. 6.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[3] See above, ch. i., p. 25.

rightly points out that a very little difference may make the act confessedly moral; if I have a friend who has not seen the fall, I must take him there. But the difference is impalpable between such acts and the ordinary routine acts of our daily life which are confessedly duties. And in reality they are all moral, either good or bad, supposing they are willed; and when they are not willed but are merely impulses, they are moral in so far as the agent is responsible for his impulse.

19. Premising that these acts if moral at all are moral, not as mere outward acts, but as conduct, we may remark that most of them are singly of so trivial a character that it would be no wonder if they rarely are praised when they are performed, and when they are omitted are condemned with slight severity. But the same thing may be said of the "thousand nameless unremembered acts" which make up the life of a good man. We are not perpetually pronouncing our approval or disapproval of acts that are done around us: the world not being made up of gossips. Moreover the inducements to many such acts are so strong, being the simple natural feelings, that moral judgment is called for only to prevent their omission, and we certainly hold a man responsible not merely for cleanliness, but for a proper regard for his health. But it is further to be observed that in most of such instances the acts are not performed for their own sakes, but either as means to some further end or as conditions of it. I poke the fire usually to warm myself and to promote my comfort: I may even do so for its own sake, because I find amusement in it; again I walk for the sake of walking, but that is because I need it for health or for pleasure. I read the newspaper to get the information which is necessary for an intelligent man. Thus such acts are always elements in the system of acts required for our health, or our amusement, or our pleasure, and they share as means in the moral value which attaches to the ends, since the nature of the means affects the character of the whole action. The

cases of really indifferent means may be dismissed at once: they arise out of the mere mechanism of action: that I can go to London by the road or the river is a fact which, we will suppose, makes no difference to my volition. That I am to go to London is not indifferent. But the act may be performed in either of two ways.

When once the so-called indifferent acts are shown in their true character, as part of health or happiness or the like, their moral nature becomes evident.[1] The moral judgment says it is right to regard your health, and *caeteris paribus* it is right to amuse yourself or promote your happiness, or more generally still to do what pleases you. And it is only the austerity we attach to the word, which prevents us from adding that it is your duty also. Here we have the foundation of that quaint doctrine of the English philosophers, that man is under a natural obligation to seek his happiness. Some would indeed deny amusement to be right, and might declare the conscious pursuit of happiness immoral. But it is enough for the purpose if they have thereby admitted the so-called indifferent actions to rank along with other moral or immoral activities.

20. The admission of such conduct to a place in the moral system destroys at once the unreal distinction between virtue and prudence. Prudence means in common language either of two things. It may mean simply taking right means to an end, and it is then praised or blamed according to the worthiness of the object. It is true we may admire a prudent though ignoble action, but we do so for the same reason as makes us give a man credit for the good motive with which he did a bad act: because that is, the discernment of the right means is a necessary

[1] It is strange that Mr. Spencer should consent to regard the acts he instances as indifferent, because he is distinguished by insisting on the obligations we are under to maintain in vigour our more directly natural functions. By such insistence he has both been true to the spirit of his philosophy, and, in my opinion, made an important contribution to our conscious ethical practice.

quality of a good character. But prudence more usually denotes the habit of performing the more self-regarding acts (those, *e.g.*, which concern health and safety), and sometimes in a bad sense the undue regard of self, and as a comprehensive term for such acts it is convenient. But so long as the regard for self is compatible with and due to the social requirements of morality, prudence is a duty and a virtue.

One word may be added as to the practical bearing of the proposition I am enforcing. It does not of course prescribe any hard and fast rule of life: it is still left to the common sense of mankind to balance the claims of health and happiness against the claims of others, where these claims conflict. Still less does it require a constant and painful attention to trivial routine; it does not do so any more than we are required to be for ever prying into our admittedly 'moral' conduct. It only asserts that, whenever we use our human privilege of conscious conduct, in the minutest observances of life as much as in our most ideal and elevated actions, we are bound in the kindly bondage of duty.[1]

[1] This must be understood in the light of subsequent conclusions as to the claim of duty to be regarded as the supreme principle of conduct. (Conclusion, sec. ii.). A question of casuistry of the kind mentioned above is suggested by the following interesting incident in the life of Strafford. Strafford's health had given way while he was executing the policy which he thought was to save the crown; but he was recovering. "On the 24th the King visited him, to congratulate him on his convalescence. In the presence of the King, Strafford had no eyes for the vacillation of the man. . . . True to his ceremonious loyalty, the convalescent threw off his warm gown to receive his sovereign in befitting guise. His imprudence went near to cost him his life. Struck down again by the chill, it was only after a week, in which the physicians despaired of recovery, that hope could again be spoken of to his friends." (Gardiner, *History of England*, vol. ix. p. 139.)

CHAPTER III.

SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS OF CONDUCT.

I.—Conduct as a Concrete Thing—Ethics and Natural Science.

1. Conduct presents certain characteristics or aspects which form convenient points of view from which to consider the method of ethics; and discussion of method, it may be observed, is fruitful only when it helps to explain some element in the subject matter of a science. The present chapter then will attempt to draw out these characteristics of conduct, and by taking advantage of them to contrast the ethical method with other scientific methods which might be thought appropriate to ethics as well.

It is under the form of right conduct or right action that morality is by preference regarded in what I will call the physical method or method of natural science, which treats morality as an object to be investigated in the same way as all other objects in the world. Morality is taken as something to be explained and brought under general laws, as the chemist or the physicist finds substances and forces to his hand of which he has to explain the action. Among the facts of our experience are human actions, and these do not stand alone, but take their place along with all other things of the world, and especially with all the facts of life. Now, under the form of conduct, morality presents itself in a tangible shape, and it is thus that it naturally appears to the method described. So

far as it goes this method is undoubtedly justifiable: moral conduct is but one part of concrete existence, and its mysteriousness can only be due to the relatively greater difficulty of understanding it. But the condition under which the method is applicable is, that it should do justice to the nature of conduct first of all as a phenomenon of mental life, with a double aspect, internal and external; secondly, as volitional and conscious.

2. The first part of this condition guards against the errors which arise when, from the attention being directed to conduct as mere action, the ideas of conduct and action are limited to the outward or perceivable side of conduct. This touches a twofold source of error. Moral action is dissociated on the one hand from the mental states from which it proceeds, and on the other from those in which it issues, its consequences. It may appear strange that two such obvious truths should have been neglected, as that every activity implies a corresponding character in the agent, or that the nature of an act differs with its results. Treat human conduct on the analogy of other life, and these truths seem to follow at once. Yet they have become recognised in those recent ethical theories, which discard metaphysics or intuitionism, only just in proportion as the strictly physical view has been replaced by the biological. The best criticism of such errors is to show how they have been outgrown by the development of this kind of ethical thought itself. As ethics changes by what seems to be a natural expansion, from being hedonistic or utilitarian to being evolutionary or biological, we can trace how these defects, glaring at first, have become felt, but not being immediately removed, have left ambiguities before they finally vanish.

3. Take first the separation of morality from its consequences. In the popular utilitarianism moral actions are expressly regarded as tending to a further end, described as pleasure, and as deriving their goodness from their

tendency to increase this pleasure.[1] But biological studies introduce the idea of life as an organic whole, to which actions are contributory factors. Hence another interpretation of the way in which moral actions are related to the end of conduct. Instead of being the antecedents of the end, which is distinct from them, they may lead up to the end and condition it as the parts may be said to result in or condition the whole. Accordingly, the end of life is described as vitality, the promotion of life in length and breadth, and the conduct which secures vitality is seen also to constitute it. But at first the other view remains along with this new one. For the justification for increase of vitality is at the same time declared to be the happiness it brings; the ultimate test of conduct is whether it produces a surplus of pleasure, and the end still seems to be as before a mere consequence of action.[2] But as the doctrine of evolution in morals develops this vacillation disappears: the end is declared to be social vitality, and morality formulates its conditions.[3]

Take again the more important separation of morality from its sentiments, of conduct from character. Morality has of course never been supposed not to be also a state of mind; but at first its mental character drops out of sight, and conduct and character are therefore regarded as distinct. What is good or bad is then not the character of the agent, but the action he performs. "Right action," in Mill's words, "does not necessarily indicate a virtuous character."[4] Biology, on the other hand, treats human

[1] Cp. Mill's *Utilitarianism*.

[2] Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, p. 34 (§ 12). I quote the whole passage, as it involves both views. "Since the complete adjustment of acts to ends is that which both *secures and constitutes* the life that is most evolved alike in length and breadth: while the justification for whatever increases life is *the reception from life of more happiness than misery*: it follows that conduciveness to happiness is the ultimate test of perfection in a man's nature." (The italics are mine.)

[3] In Mr. L. Stephen's *Science of Ethics*.

[4] Mill's *Utilitarianism*, p. 29. Doubtless Mill is thinking of the difference between disposition and character, but there is no explanation of it.

conduct on the analogy of the rest of animal action, and when its application to ethics has become clearer, the identity of character and conduct has become frankly recognised and insisted upon.[1] An intermediate stage is again marked by the more popular form of evolutionary ethics, which takes morality not by itself, but only in its place in a systematic account of life, as "that form which animal conduct assumes during the last stages of its evolution."[2] Here the character of the agent has not yet received its full significance. Hence while the merely physical description of conduct is declared to be inadequate, because it treats conduct only as a set of combined motions,[3] if we look for an account of what the agent's mind is, we find only a description of how the feelings which "accompany" morality are evolved, and these feelings are not the moral sentiments, but, as in the older utilitarianism, they are merely the restraints which check immoral action. The character to which such restraints appeal is left unexamined.

4. But it is not enough to have advanced to the biological view, with its habit of treating an activity as a whole with different sides which are inseparable. The subject of moral judgment must be recognised in the peculiar character which it possesses as being volitional, as being not merely a practical activity, but one which contains the consciousness of its object. Hence, as we have seen, there is the closest possible relation between its inward and outward elements. Conduct is identical with character, not merely in the sense that acts issue from certain corresponding feelings, as the hunger of a dog drives him in quest of food. On the one hand, the moral sentiments are themselves directed towards the conduct; on the other, the conduct is itself an act of mind besides having a mechanical manifestation. And once more, not only does the result of conduct make the act itself different, but the

[1] I think again of Mr. Stephen's work.
[2] *Data of Ethics*, p. 20. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

consideration of the results is represented in the kind of conduct which is the object of will.

To insist upon the peculiar character of human conduct is not antagonistic to the belief that morality is nothing but a highly developed form of conduct in general. In reality it is but doing full justice to the idea of development. That there is a steady progression from the lowest form of animal action up to the highest human conduct cannot reasonably be doubted—the difficulty would be to explain how there should be an exception to a universal law. Nor again, though the possession of consciousness, in the sense I have explained, creates a wide difference between certain lower kinds of mental facts and others, do I suppose that there is any breach of continuity in the advance, any intrusion of a new and mysterious power. But if development is to be an intelligible idea, we have not only to believe in a continuity along the scale, but to recognise the differences which distinguish the members of the progression from one another. Because the ascidian mollusc develops into an ape, it would be monstrous to deny that an ape is not an ascidian. Language loses its meaning if, because we can trace indefinite gradations between the pouter and the rock-pigeon, we are to declare the two to be identical.

It is in this sense that volition constitutes a peculiar fact. Dealing with ethics by itself, then, and not with the whole of nature, we have to recognise the characteristics of the will, which is the medium and substance of morality. Without the consciousness of its object which distinguishes will, the object of ethics ceases to be what it pretends to be. All through the inquiry we shall have to note how phenomena which have already appeared in lower life are modified as we pass into human life: the central fact of obligation loses otherwise its significance, and when we are dealing with the development of morality itself, and shall have to trace the analogy with animal development, it will be seen how great a difference is

introduced by the peculiar nature of the organism with which we deal.

The use of the word conduct to cover animal and human action alike, has helped to obliterate the distinction of morality from other kinds of life. Conduct is a term which belongs properly to willed, or, as it seems to be, distinctively human, action, and its extension is a piece of anthropomorphism. We read ourselves into the animals, and we figure them under the same laws as ourselves. And they do follow the same laws, but these laws operate under different conditions. It is the business of ethics to emphasise and not to slur these differences. The conduct of a man is different from the conduct of an amœba, because it is the conduct of a *man* and not of an *amœba*.

II.—The Value of Conduct—Ethics and Psychology.

5. As being psychical, conduct falls under the science of psychology. But ethics treats conduct differently from psychology, for it regards it not simply for its own sake, but on the ground of its *value*. All moral judgments, it will be admitted, imply reference to some standard of value. This standard itself we have not to examine at present, but only to ask what the basis of the idea of value is.

It will be useful to begin by presenting the difference of mental and moral judgments in a form which will bring out the difference more explicitly. By a mental or psychological judgment I mean the representation in language of a mental event, of what state a man's mind happens to be in at a particular moment. These judgments vary in complexity from the simple expression of sensation, "I am cold," to that of self-consciousness, "I am myself." Strictly speaking, the propositional form, "I have a feeling," would be too complex to represent the simplest fact of consciousness. The sensation of cold as distinguished from the

consciousness or inner perception of it would more properly be expressed by the interjection "cold!" and the same may be true of a feeling of anger which might be more accurately expressed by one of the many interjections used in swearing. Let us take the judgment, "I am cold," or "I feel angry," or "I want food." In these propositions the subject is left to be explained by the predicate, which asserts that the subject is qualified in a particular way, or is in a particular state. The "I" is present to the mind as a given whole, just as when we say "the tree is green," or "the tree has greenness," the tree is given to us in perception, and the judgment declares its quality. As a matter of fact, the "I" is a mass of feelings and ideas, but nothing further is stated of it by the proposition than that it has a feeling of cold or of anger. In like manner in the propositions "I desire to give" or even "I will to give," there is nothing more expressed than that there is a mind which is qualified at present by the desire or will to give.

On the other hand, the moral judgments, "my act" or "my will to give is good,"[1] are in a different position. They contain in fact a double assertion: not only that I have or had the will to give, but that the will to give is good. They mean that I, as qualified by this particular will or act, am good. And in the same way if we introduce the notion of "I" in an explicit form into the judgment, which will then be of the form, "I am good," there is more contained in the subject than is expressed. In reality such judgments contain the reason for the attribution of the predicate. "My will to give is good," means that my will is good, because it is the will to give. The moral judgment is passed, therefore, on the ground of the quality of the will or of the "I." The psychological judgment merely indicates by the predicate what the quality of the

[1] I might equally well use the illustration, "my motive" or "feeling is good." The notion of perfection (cp. p. 29) which is contained in the word 'good' here equally expresses a standard, though not directly a moral standard. But to do so would be to introduce a needless complication.

state is. It is this fact, that moral judgments are passed on the ground of quality, which has to be developed.

6. Before proceeding, however, it is plain that the distinction of ethics from psychology, whatever it be, will not be sufficient to mark off ethics completely. The reference to a standard is implied not only in morals but in knowledge and art as well. It is implied in nature also wherever the question of a standard in natural objects arises. But, apart from this, æsthetics and logic, or whatever the science of truth be called, have their standards as well of truth and beauty; and with them, too, truth and beauty are conveyed in mental forms, in knowledge and in imagination. The mark which distinguishes ethics from these must be sought elsewhere; and it is found in the ancient distinction of practice from theory and production. The activities which are judged by the standard of truth are not simply practical. Knowledge indeed is practical so far as it is an activity, but it is confined to the region of ideas; art, though eminently practical, does not, as art, deal with the will, but it seeks to convert its ideas into actual material form in words, or sounds, or colours, or solid objects. And with this the difficulty need concern us no longer.

7. In speaking of the quality of a psychical action, I am making use of a distinction recognised by psychology and of essential importance, between two inseparable elements, the mental act itself as a process or event,[1] and what it contains, or what it is about. The distinction applies to all psychological states: they are mental processes, events of mind, and at the same time they have a definite content, a character of their own through which they retain a place in the mind's history. There is, for example, nothing which can be described as a sensation pure and simple: it is always a sensation qualified in a

[1] 'Process' and 'event' are used here without distinction. The question might justly be raised elsewhere, whether they really are identical.

particular way and described by such a phrase as the sensation of heat or cold. An idea, in like manner, besides implying a mental activity, and existing in the mind as a mental event, is always an idea of a certain kind, and is said to be an idea *of* something which is its object. In English we are sometimes able to express the difference of the two elements by different words, perception as compared with percept, conception and concept; but half our difficulties arise from having no word to distinguish an idea from its content.[1]

This distinction is of capital importance, for it is in virtue of these characters, or qualities, or contents, that psychological states are so connected as to be regarded as states of one mind. These contents are what logicians call universals, that is, they are not limited to the particular events they qualify, but are common to many states of mind. And though each state has a multiple character in virtue of which it occupies a definite place in the mind's history, each of its elements is still universal. The sensation of white, to take the simplest case, is characterised by a universal quality which is specified into the quality of this particular sensation by the other circumstances under which it occurs. In like manner in any desire, *e.g.*, desire for food, the content of the desire, so far as it is expressed by the given description, is universal: the desire for food is one element in the desire for a particular food, and any fresh determination of the content, as, *e.g.*, the desire for meat at the luncheon hour, is only the addition of fresh universal characters, which in their complex composition make up the individual content. Even if the individual content could be exhausted by complete knowledge, all its distinguishing marks would still be universal. Now it is with these universal characters that the mind works in the connection of

[1] The German language is more fortunate. In its infinitival and substantival terminations it possesses a ready means of maintaining the distinction: e.g., *Vorstellen* and *Vorstellung* or *Vorgestelltes*, *Erinnern* and *Erinnerung*, *Wollen* and *Wille*.

psychological states with one another. Thus the undoubted facts of association are intelligible only in virtue of the identity of content between the associated ideas.[1] Without any appeal to metaphysics, these universals seem to be involved as elements in all psychological phenomena. And in all our psychological processes it is this universality of content or quality by which they are, as it were, hooked on to each other into a continuous life.

8. Now it is plain that both these elements are present in both ethics and psychology. The distinction between an event and its quality or content is a distinction drawn within psychology itself—every event has a quality, and it has been seen how important it is to recognise this. And on the other hand the subject of moral judgment has not merely a character or quality, but it is a psychical event, and whether it be limited to will, as here, or the moral predicate be attached also to feelings and the like, they are all events. But the difference of ethics and psychology may be stated in this way. Psychology is concerned with the event as such, and ethics with the quality or content as such. To psychology the content is relatively indifferent, the event is the direct object of attention: to ethics the nature of the event as such is relatively indifferent, and the content is the nerve of moral distinctions.

9. In face of the importance which has been assigned above to the recognition of the content of a mental event in psychology, the proposition that the content is to psychology relatively indifferent must be further explained. It means that whenever the content is considered, it is because it makes a difference to the event. That a science should regard one aspect of a thing rather than another is not remarkable. The artist regards light and colours so far as they concern the composition of his picture; but their effects depend on the physical pro-

[1] This has been proved by Mr. Bradley in his *Principles of Logic*.

perties of light, which he leaves to the optician. To take another example of a different kind: logic formulates certain types of inference, which are not independent of the material upon which they are employed in the sense that they could operate without any material, but take no account of the particular material, which is unessential. In the same way psychology generalises all desires under one head so far as an account can be given of them as psychical events, without attending to what they are desires for. It distinguishes the processes or events called sensations from perception, and from memory or will. The object of perception may be identical with the object of volition, but it is not the same thing to perceive as to will it.

Psychology, however, it will be said, besides recognising the importance of the quality of its events does recognise these qualities directly in distinguishing the different kinds of events that fall under its general divisions. It enumerates, for example, the different kinds of simple sensation, of light, warmth, pressure, sound. And in like manner it distinguishes the sensations of colour according as they are red or blue or green. Or again it marks the qualitative distinction between anger on the one side and sorrow or joy on the other, by distinguishing among feelings between passions and affections. But these examples, or many others that might be quoted, do not militate against the proposition, that in psychology we really regard not what the content is, but the nature of the process or event. For the distinctions are made because a difference of content corresponds to a difference of process. Psychology is here but following the practice which would be followed by any other science in a similar case. Thus to revert to the former instances, if an artist discovered certain physical peculiarities in colours which made a difference to the artistic effect of the colours themselves, he would take advantage of these properties for his art. Or again, when the logician, having described

inference in general without regard to its special material, finds that he can distinguish fresh elements of regularity in the latter, he will recognise corresponding differences in the kinds of inference, and will rightly call them formal still. Whenever, therefore, a distinction of quality means one of process, it is rightly added to the details of psychology. In many such cases the psychical analysis cannot be performed, or has not yet been performed. Thus the different sensations of colour have not yet been resolved into distinguishing psychical elements, but are differentiated by the physical process on which they depend. But where the analysis can be performed, as in distinguishing anger, pain, joy, what psychology does is to trace the genesis of these different affections.

10. With ethics the case is different. For psychological purposes all desires have a general character, but it would depend upon what a desire was for, and what its particular content is, whether the gratification of it would be right or wrong. Psychology never inquires why at hearing of the death of a rival it may be wrong to encourage the feeling of joy, and right to encourage that of sorrow: nor why under certain circumstances anger may be the feeling of a morally good man, as when an insult has been offered to a man's dignity, while the affection or passion of revenge would be reprehensible. Nor again does it inquire why it is that the act of giving money to a poor person, which is ordinarily permissible, is condemned, if it implies in its content or quality that the money is to be taken from others, who will suffer in consequence of the act. Psychologically a dying man's desire for a cup of water has the same nature as his desire for saving the life of another, but morally speaking to gratify the first may leave a man no better or worse than an ordinary son of Adam, while to gratify the second at the expense of the other may make him a hero.

An illustration is offered by the kind of literature called psychological studies, dealing with the development of

character. A well-known and splendid example is the history of Tito in *Romola*, which shows how acts done from yielding to a momentary temptation convert by their own force of self-reproduction a man of gifts and promise into a debauchee and a villain. The same history might be traced in the lives of many criminals; and it presents the outlines of how the lives of most good men also are fashioned. Substitute for temptations to vice encouragements to virtue; the history becomes prosaic: but it follows the same psychological laws. But, morally speaking, it would be an entirely different life, and the moral judgment in reviewing it would accept as a fact the process by which in both cases the two persons came to do what they did, and would reflect upon what kind of acts they were which made of the one a profligate and of the other a good member of society.

11. Thus that the subject of moral judgment is a fact of mind is merely the starting point of ethics: morality is human and contained in human deeds: but the cardinal trait of morality, its approval or condemnation, depends not on the event as such, but on the character or quality which it possesses. Ethics does not inquire of the mind how it comes to be what it is, but what it is. The former question it leaves for psychology. If any one likes to call this difference in the objects of ethics and psychology a difference of aspect, I have no quarrel with him.

Ethics can attend exclusively to the quality or content of the agent's mind, because all the mental states it judges are first, to borrow an expression from arithmetic, reduced to a common denominator, that of volition. The nature of the mental state being given, the particular content of the will is left to predominate.

But it is more important to observe that the judgment of content is the basis of the idea of *value*. I repeat that this difference between content and fact does not belong exclusively to ethics in contrast with

psychology, but is found whenever the distinction between something which happens and its nature can be drawn. And it can be drawn not only in the departments of truth and beauty, but in nature as well. Whenever nature is regarded teleologically it is its qualities which are judged, and not the mere fact of existence. That a shell discharged from a cannon explodes is an event of the shell, but the explosive character of its behaviour is a reason for pronouncing it to be a good shell or indeed a shell at all.

The idea of value, therefore, has as much a universal validity as we have seen conduct has. But just as there we saw that conduct is a term extended by analogy downwards from human conduct, so here the idea of value is primarily a moral conception, which has become extended much in the same way as 'duty' may by a metaphor be used to describe the business of any one part of a machine. 'Value' is the value of the willed act, and is distinct from the 'business' or 'function' or 'significance' of other actions. But the word being understood in a general sense, the value which morality judges must be described as moral value, and it is distinguished from other value because it depends not simply on an act being of a certain quality, but on its being conscious of its quality. The object of volition is that which gives character to the volition as an event, and of this object the author of the volition is conscious. The value of willed action is thus distinguished from the value of mere instinctive action, and still more from the value of the qualities of a material object. On the other hand, it is distinguished from the value of a desire, because volition makes its idea real, desire leaves it ideal still.

Thus the content of a moral act is the ground of moral value. Two remarks, however, must be added. Whether a particular act has value or not depends on the standard: to say that it has a certain quality assigns only the *sine qua non* of its having value. Secondly, that a moral value should be attached to an act requires no other condition.

The value is based on the quality of the act and that alone, and it implies no further idea than that the object of the action is of a particular quality. Here it is that metaphysics steps in and claims from the beginning some additional element, and accordingly we have to consider the view which metaphysics takes of the nature of moral conduct.

III.—What Conduct Implies—Ethics and Metaphysics.

12. The assertion that the only condition implied in a willed act in order that it should be capable of receiving moral judgment is that it is a will for a particular object, coincides with a popular criterion of good actions. It is commonly thought to be characteristic of good action that it should be performed *for its own sake.* The analysis of conduct and motive effected in the previous chapter enables us to attach to the phrase a meaning perfectly definite. To will an act for its own sake implies simply that the object of the will is the act, and nothing but the act: whenever an act is said to be willed from some impure motive for personal and selfish profit, or for ease of life, it is never the act itself that is willed, but some other object to which the former stands in the relation of condition or means. Wherever the pursuit of an object is contaminated by some ulterior aim, whether art or science is pursued for the sake of utility, or religion as a mere incentive to morality, it is a new and different object that is proposed. When the reformers of 1832 raised the cry of "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill," they were advocating the Bill for its own sake. This mode of statement may serve to strip the notion under discussion of part of that extra and peculiar meaning which it seems to possess. It shows in particular that to desire an end for its own sake is not confined to the good man as contrasted with the bad: they differ, ideally speaking, not in the singleness of their purpose, but in

the object of their efforts, and this is the reason why the ideal of bad action has been represented by the character which deliberately pursues an evil, holding it to be his good. Why such a description seems to correspond so ill to human nature, which is as far removed from monstrosity as it is from divinity, is partly that bad action is often of a mixed character, but mostly because it is very rarely that the whole nature of an action in its bearing upon one's self and society is presented directly to the mind. It is rarely that a man would justify a bad action by maintaining that he does it because it is bad. But the same may be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of the ordinary good action: it is not often that a good action is done because it is good.

13. We are, however, in the habit of using the phrase 'for its own sake' as equivalent to 'because it is right or good' or 'because I think it right,' making it stand for a statement of the ground of conduct, instead of an assertion that the object of action is really what it pretends to be. In so doing we are reading into the action (supposing it to be done without a special consciousness of its rightness) more than is contained in our real state of mind. We are in fact putting into our will what is really contained not in the will itself, but in the moral judgment passed upon it. The will is for a particular object, say relief of a sufferer, and though it is true that because of this object it is either right or wrong, yet we do not necessarily have before our minds the idea of its rightness as such. We simply will the act which is right, judging what is required under the circumstances, and doing it for its own sake. In certain cases we may thus think of the act in its bearing on the whole of life. The highest strain of morality might well seem to imply such conditions, and this is why to the minds of Socrates and his followers the highest morality was possible only to him who had insight (φρόνησις) into the true relations of things. But this is certainly not true in all moral action.

14. The error of reading into the consciousness of an

agent the idea of the rightness of the act, however its rightness is conceived, is one which it is difficult not to commit. It is a confusion which is indeed to some degree inherent in language itself. For instance, it is natural to describe the prevailing tendency of a character to seek personal advantage under the name of self-love, but the word may lead us into imagining that such selfish action is performed from a state of mind which consists in love for self, which implies in other words the presentation of an explicit idea of self and an attendant affection for it. Such an idea would be confusing a theory in the form of a feeling with what actually exists, namely, a mere representation of my advantage.[1]

A mistake of the same kind was made by Kant when he declared (in flat opposition to the ordinary moral judgment) that no act was good unless done, not merely rightly, but from a sense of duty. It is true Kant professes to derive this "from the common rational knowledge of morality," but the account cannot be entertained for a moment. It would exclude from morality all the lives of respectable people in easy circumstances and the greater part of those of respectable people who have to struggle with difficulties and temptations. It is true that what is right is a duty, but the agent does not always think of it *as duty*. In the same way to describe morality as acting from respect for the law may be a true account of what makes an act good, but the consciousness of law need not be present to the agent's mind. What a theory of this kind does is to take certain ideas discoverable by an analysis of goodness and import them into the object of volition. And it is helped in doing so by the fact that we can always find a state of mind in which such ideas really are present.

15. The introduction of metaphysics into ethical method seems either to commit an error of this kind, though in a different way, or else to be unnecessary and irrelevant.

[1] See later, Book II. ch. iv. sec. iii. pp. 175–6.

By the metaphysical method I mean one which maintains that before we can understand morality we must have some definite idea of the nature of man and his position in relation to the rest of the universe, and these ideas we must bring with us to ethical problems. One of the most influential forms of this method is that which finds as the condition of all knowledge and conduct a self which is not itself a phenomenon, or in time, but is logically implied in everything which is in time. In conduct, it is asserted, the will directs itself towards an object which contains the idea of this self and its good. There is here no description of what makes an act right introduced into the object of the will. "Good" means that which satisfies wants. Hence the same account holds both of right conduct and of wrong. Right and wrong conduct differ according to their object; but both alike imply that the agent seeks the good or satisfaction of himself in this object. Good is thus correlative with the self: it is what satisfies a self, and it has the same character of permanence that the self possesses. Every will then is said to be directed upon an object in which two conceptions are "implied," which depend on a certain theory of human nature. At the same time, while the method holds that the self and its good are thus implied in every will, it maintains equally strongly that these ideas need not be thought of in the abstract, and that in general the will endeavours to effect certain concrete ends.[1]

[1] The theory in question is represented by the late T. H. Green. I quote some passages illustrating both parts of the doctrine. In order to emphasise the difference of human action from that of animals, he holds that "in every moral action, virtuous or vicious, the human self thus constituted [*i.e.*, as a reproduction of itself by the eternal self-conscious subject of the world] presents to itself some possible state or achievement of its own as for the time its greatest good, and acts for the sake of that good" (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 102). This is still more strongly expressed in speaking of "the difference between the existence of an individual soul, and the individual's presentation of his individuality to himself" (p. 102). In a particular case, what determines a man to eat is "his own conception of himself as finding for the time his greatest good in the satisfaction of hunger" (p. 100). On the other hand, "when a man sits down in a calm hour to consider what his permanent well-being consists in, what it is that, in

16. Two truths about volition seem to lie at the basis of this theory, and to be interpreted by it in a particular way. The object of volition being something mental, whether simple or complex, does not stand by itself, in isolation from every other mental state, but depends like everything mental on the unity of mind. There is a unity of the mind as there is a unity of a stone. This unity is interpreted as a timeless self or unifying principle, which may be called the metaphysical self.

The other truth is that in every volition the mind is self-conscious. Both the self of which the mind is conscious and the self-consciousness itself are, however, phenomena of the mind, and however complicated can be subjected to investigation like other psychological facts. This self, which may be called the empirical self, is a group of mental states which form a permanent nucleus in the mental history. It does not exist at all in the beginning of our mental life, and again it is only after a considerable time that it takes the form of what we know as our personality. In willing we become aware of this self, and are self-conscious. For in willing I am at present in a certain condition: I have before me the idea of being in another condition, and both the impulse which effects the will, and the idea which corresponds to it, come out of the personality, for my will is not like a sudden access of feeling, but a deliberate execution. In other words, what I have before my mind is the satisfaction of certain elements of my personality. When the will is complete, the two groups which make the one the actual self, the other the ideal self, blend together, and this is the state of self-consciousness.[1]

desiring it, he really desires, it is not indeed to be supposed that he traces the desire back to its ultimate source in his self-objectifying personality, or that he thinks of its object in the abstract form of that which will satisfy the demand arising from such a personality" (p. 251).

[1] For an account of the origin and development of the self, see Volkmann, ii., §§ 105–116, and Ward's article *Psychology* (*Encycl. Brit.*, vol. xx., pp. 83, 84). For the connection of will and self-consciousness, see Volkmann, § 148.

17. Now when the self and its good are said to be implied in all objects of will, we may mean either that these things are there, though we need not be aware of them at all, or we may mean that there is always something in the object which we must describe by these ideas, though they need not of course be present in explicit form. In the latter case we are really describing the truth that the will is conscious of itself, but we are interpreting this empirical self by the notion of a metaphysical or timeless self. In doing so we are confusing these two different things and reading into the object of volition certain ideas which form a theory of the nature of the mind and its objects.[1]

If it is replied that this phenomenal self in its turn implies the metaphysical or timeless self, we are falling back upon the other alternative, that this latter self is always behind the object of volition though not a part of the object. But if so it is both for psychology and for

[1] These two views of the self seem to be confused in the definition of the self. "The self is not something apart from feelings, desires, and thoughts, but that which unites them, or which they become as united, in the character of an agent who is an object to himself" (*Prolegomena*, p. 105).

I assume in the text that the timeless self may be a reality. But the conception appears to me to rest upon a confusion which arises in the following way. The unity of the mind is only possible through the connection between the contents of mental events. Green is as clear as possible in asserting this distinction of "events in our mental history, the passing into certain states of consciousness," from "that of which in these states we are conscious, the content and object of consciousness" (p. 62). Knowledge, though it is of course a state of mind, is concerned with these qualities or contents of experience, and apprehends their relations. These form the object of knowledge, or what is called known facts. Morality, again, as we have seen, depends on the will having a certain content. Now to these contents and the relations between them the idea of time is inapplicable, they are considered apart from the temporal events in which they become known. Carrying this farther, and thinking of any one person's knowledge, we arrive at the idea of an intelligible order of relations, which is given to the apprehending subject, and is in no sense itself a subject. But the timeless character of the object of knowledge is transferred to the subject of knowledge. Hence two contradictory positions: the self is denied to be merely the subject of knowledge, but at the same time it is regarded as the unifying mental principle. It combines together two incompatible characters, that of knowledge as timeless and ideal, and that of a combination of mental events. What would be intelligible as a connection of ideal relations is turned into a real thing and given a psychological existence. I do not touch upon the relation of the human and the divine self, which opens up still larger questions.

ethics an unnecessary idea. It stands in much the same position as the body stands with regard to all mental states, certainly present and so far implied in any one of them, but not entering into them except when it happens to be reflected upon. If we only mean that the mental unity is contained in all objects of volition, why encumber this fact by insisting that the unity is something *sui generis* and different from the unity of every phenomenal thing? It is enough to know that mental states are united in virtue of their characters. The reason for insisting on the peculiar nature of the mental unity is antagonism to a particular school of psychology which leaves no place for any unity at all.[1] But to maintain that this unity is a timeless self is to maintain that which may or may not be true, but in any case is a premature intrusion into ethics of metaphysical theory.

18. There seem to be two reasons why a metaphysical basis is supposed peculiarly necessary for ethics. In the first place some of the working conceptions of ethics have to be taken from psychology; but psychology itself, if it is accurate, finds that the unity of the mind means that there are certain universal elements (which have been called content or character) in mental facts. Because this is so, the notion of the unity (or as it is loosely called the self) is thought to be metaphysical. But if psychology itself discovers that the mind operates by means of the characters of its events, this recognition is still a part of psychology. It is true that psychology, like any other science, is so far hypothetical that it uses ideas (such as the 'content' of ideas, or 'mental' as distinct from 'physical') the ultimate meaning of which has to be examined by metaphysics. But the distinction of particular sciences from metaphysics would vanish, if wherever they used such ideas they were declared to be really dependent on meta-

[1] See at greater length Book II. ch. iv. sec. ii. (*a*), 'The controversy about hedonism.' Also in sec. ii. (*d*), 'Pleasure and the object of conduct,' some remarks on the ethical value of both Kant's view and the view that conduct aims at permanent good (pp. 224–5).

physics. The latter science investigates the questions which are left over for it by other sciences, questions fundamental and depending like those of all other sciences on the existence of certain facts, but not capable of decision till the ground has been prepared. The ideas of metaphysics, though first in the order of importance, are not first in the order of discovery.

19. The other reason why ethics is thought to require metaphysics to precede it, and to be in fact a part of metaphysics, is that ethical inquiries really stand very near to metaphysics, and may be the most natural way of raising ultimate questions. Later on, one or two instances will be given where ethical inquiry is by itself insufficient, and suggests for solution of its difficulties more comprehensive questions. But ethics is not a part of metaphysics because it happens to stand, so to speak, next door. To suppose so is a prejudice analogous to that which confines a liberal education to literature, and excludes the study of natural science. A liberal education aims at producing the character which is bent upon seeing things truly, whether in merely intellectual matters, or in affairs of life. It depends on the love of truth, and gives that feeling an object. The habit may be more easily acquired, in general, by living in contact with the great thoughts of great men about human life, on account of the familiarity and the practical importance of the ideas. But the multiplicity of details in nature and the remoteness of its interest do not make the study of it less liberalising because truth may be here more difficult to find. In like manner ethics is not made the more metaphysical because it perpetually borders on metaphysics. It does so because it deals with conduct, and conduct means a uniting of nature and mind to form a new reality. But instead of its being true that "some conclusion in regard to the relation between man and nature must be arrived at before we can be sure that any theory of ethics is other than wasted labour," [1] that relation can-

[1] Adapted from *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 54.

not be properly discussed before we have explained what attitude is taken by man towards nature in good conduct. The temptation is strong, to think that, where mind enters, metaphysics enters with it; but so long as ethics is content to describe the facts before it, to examine the meaning of right and wrong, and to explain the basis of those institutions in which good is expressed, it remains in its own proper sphere. It leaves to metaphysics such questions as the relation of man to nature, the meaning of there being a multiplicity of minds (which seems to depend on their natural conditions), the ultimate nature of the individual, and reality in general, but these questions leave ethics in a different shape from that which they possess before ethics exists. Metaphysical ideas are implied in every science and indeed in every judgment of life, but all the sciences contribute to elucidate their meaning, when the time comes to consider them in connection one with the other.

IV.—Ethical Method.

20. Let us gather together from this discussion of how ethics treats conduct, the hints we have learned as to ethical method as a whole. Ethics has first of all not to wait for metaphysics, but to prepare for it. In contrast with psychology, the duty of ethics lies in investigating not the mental events which make morality, but the reason of their receiving a value. The moral judgments are themselves of course mental events, but to interpret them we need the prior ethical inquiry. Ethics does indeed examine into the events called conduct, but the inquiry is only so far ethical as it discusses their bearings on moral judgment. But this preliminary labour achieved, it is concerned with the standard or type of conduct. Lastly, as regards the natural sciences, ethics can follow in their path only by observing the conditions imposed by the

nature of conduct itself. This restriction holds as regards biology as well, with which ethics has a special relation, because that science deals also with types, and accordingly we shall expect to find the truth of ethics analogous all along the line with those of the animal world.

If we are to give a name to the method which has to satisfy these conditions, it can only be that of the ethical method, or the method of science in general, as limited to the requirements of this particular order of facts. All science is one; it is the kind of facts it investigates which makes it and its method different. The name of moral philosophy has fostered the tendency to put ethics and logic by themselves, as though they were not sciences at all, and as though philosophy itself were not merely science at a certain stage. Moral science would be for this view a preferable name, if it did not expose ethics to be classed along with the natural sciences, as if its object were not different in kind, though related by affinity. The ancient name of ethics makes no presupposition, and leaves us free to treat the subject-matter of the science on its own merits, and according to its own wants. That subject-matter consists in the moral judgments which our science has partly to classify, partly to analyse into their elements and to examine in their growth and movement. What this ethical method is in detail must be seen from its working. One part of the analysis, the ethical bearings of conduct, which is the subject of moral judgment, the present book has attempted to supply. We have now to consider the predicates of the judgment, the ideas of good and bad, right and wrong, themselves.

BOOK II.

STATICAL—MORAL ORDER.

PART I.—MORAL PREDICATES.

CHAPTER I.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE LAW.

I.—The Data.

1. The fundamental problem of ethics is to discover the meaning of the conceptions *good* and *bad*, or *right* and *wrong*, which with their allied epithets form the predicates of moral judgment. This inquiry, for which the preceding book has supplied only the preliminaries, I propose to conduct with especial reference to another problem, how the individual agent is related to the society in which he lives. It is plain that there could be no analysis of goodness which did not offer a solution of this other question as well: in the present state of ordinary and scientific opinion upon ethical subjects it is hardly dogmatic to declare the two problems to be identical. One thing at any rate is certain, that a proper analysis of goodness would exhibit the bearing of this conception upon both the individual and society, and explain the elements involved both in the conflict and the reconciliation between the interests of the unit and those of the whole.

The recognition that morality is unintelligible without reference to some society or to the larger needs of mankind is not only the prominent feature of the ethics of the day,

but is implied in all moral theories that have ever been formulated. Even the strictest theory of selfish pleasure recognises an end distinct from the pleasure of the moment, and demands in conduct an estimate of circumstances, into which enter the liability to pain and the susceptibility to pleasure which a man derives from the existence of his fellow-men. Sympathy with the pleasures and pains of others has been made by the greatest of the hedonistic writers (Hume) the basis of moral sentiments.

An exception would seem to be created by Cyrenaic theories, which apparently lower the human end to momentary enjoyment. The exception is apparent only. Such theories often express less than they intend or than is attested by the practice of their authors. The wise are in fact called upon not to take each vulgar or casual pleasure as it comes, but to refine and select. The series of dainty and delightful moments is tempered and regulated by a certain concealed idea of personal dignity, an idea which appears in undisguised form in our modern representatives of Cyrenaic thought.[1] Such personal dignity, as will be shown hereafter, implies a conception of man as not merely personal or a centre merely for himself, but as typical of a perfection which others may sympathise in and can attain. And if the proposition that morality is not merely a concern of the individual is true even on theories of pleasure, it is more obviously true on those which maintain an absolute law binding upon the individual—a law which they contemplate as valid for a society, or mankind, and as expressing the qualities of human nature as such, irrespective of merely personal or private inclination.

2. If there has never been a theory of individualism which has not taken into account the claims of society or mankind, neither has there ever been a theory which, starting from the idea of a law greater than the individual, has not imposed upon the individual as such the

[1] *E.g.*, Pater's *Marius the Epicurean.*

responsibility of carrying out this law. To avoid the ambiguity of the word socialism we may call the latter kind of view universalism. Individualism then and universalism—an antithesis which has been the chief dividing mark of ethical theories in the century—represent two modes of regarding morality which differ in the order in which they take their terms. To the former the *individual* comes first, and is the measure of the *law;* to the latter the law or society comes first, and is the measure of the worth of the individual. Both these views are supported by groups of striking and obvious facts. In pausing to indicate these two groups of facts no apology is needed for their obviousness or familiarity. It is such familiar facts, so familiar as to seem hardly worth notice, which mark out the broad lines upon which the philosophical sciences everywhere proceed. A world of misunderstanding in philosophy might be removed if the data were once clearly stated upon which the opposing parties rest their case. The more obvious the data the more likely they are to be withheld. But the chief difficulties of philosophy arise from the familiarity of its facts, and a writer on ethics at least is not at liberty to shrink from platitudes.

The antithesis in ethical theories has its corresponding antithesis in the theory of knowledge, and it will be useful to adduce parallel facts in illustration from this other department. Let us first take the facts or the considerations which point to the independence or the isolation of the individual. In the first place knowledge is independent, because it comes to us ultimately from our sensations, the most personal of all our mental phenomena. "Seeing is believing" is a common saying, which refers a man back for truth upon something which he must possess for himself and not through another. All doctrines of relativity, from Protagoras downwards, repose on this simple fact. Knowledge is indeed not given by the senses of any one man alone, but it must come through a combination of materials supplied by the

senses. But more important is the consideration that knowledge, if it is to be real, must be held by the personal effort of the learner. A man who merely repeats what he hears from others does not possess knowledge, but only he who has assimilated it to his own mind, so that it forms a part of his mental stock, and is sensitive to the forces which act upon his intellect. In all learning there is an element contributed by the teacher, but more vital is the element contributed by the learner. Hence even the most elementary education seeks to make the child use his knowledge for himself, stimulating him to test the ideas he has learnt and to inquire further. Still more plainly is this true of the student, who can only be said to learn when his knowledge has that activity which is the symptom of its having struck root. True knowledge is thus the possession only of those who think for themselves, and no advance in knowledge has ever been made but by the independent contributions of persons who have followed up honestly their own ideas, who have lifted their *opinions* to the measure of facts, who have put into the common stock and submitted to the judgment of others the data and the generalisations which they have themselves acquired, the aspects of things which have appeared to them and not to another.

3. Precisely similar phenomena are supplied by conduct. All right action appeals ultimately to the wants or to the inclinations of individuals. Though it is not settled by what one man likes, yet the likes and dislikes of persons are the suggestion of conduct, and good conduct is a kind of compromise between them. A state of society which pleased no one would be an impossibility. A constitution is permanent which commends itself to its separate members, who have therefore often been supposed to create the body politic by an original contract. And, secondly, as a man's knowledge must be independent, so it is a cardinal truth of life that his conduct must be spontaneous, must arise from a self-reliant and independent

character. It is not enough to act upon the direction of others: nor again would a state of things so elaborately arranged that a person had only to acquiesce in what he found be a moral order at all. A person who needs to be constrained to good behaviour we regard as a criminal. Good conduct must be done, as we say, freely; and again we cultivate the habit of independent judgment in action. The maxim "Help yourself and God will help you" indicates our belief that the higher law approves only of those characters which are based upon independent effort. We think of a well organised society as one composed of persons whose characters have a meaning, each for itself, and who, moreover, render their service to society by making the best of themselves in the rivalry with others. Nor is this all. Just as truth arises from the shock of independent and individual opinions, so does right depend upon the conciliation of infinite differences of talent, interest, opportunity. The law, as we shall see, is not a maxim of uniformity, but every person starts on his work with a different equipment. He has to make himself out of these materials a definite and spontaneous character.

4. It is to such trite though not trivial elements of ordinary experience that individualism appeals. But there are facts as obvious which point not to the independence of the individual, but to his solidarity. Knowledge must indeed be independent, but if it is true knowledge and worth having, it is something not exclusive to its possessor, but intelligible to others. Truth has in fact a positive existence irrespective of the particular person who acquires it, and yet exists only in the minds of those who know. There is thus a social element in all true knowledge, in virtue of which it passes from mind to mind, and forms the permanent source from which individual acquisitions are derived. Moreover, though truth is formed by opinions and based upon the senses, there is always something of a man's opinions or his sensible experience which is given up in attaining truth.

He has to take care that his opinions shall not contain a merely personal element which confines them to himself. To think for yourself not only does not exclude, but on the contrary rigidly demands thinking along with others, the putting off of idiosyncrasies, the discounting of circumstances which can be appreciated only by yourself. The variable or transitory character of experience again, which arises from our mere changing moods, has to be stripped off before experience is in a form which others may understand, or can be expressed in the language which shall represent it to them. Mere opinion and mere experience have to be corrected: if not, then the knowledge, however much it bears the marks of independence, is isolated knowledge: it has not the characteristic of all truth—that it shall work.

5. The solidarity of good conduct is more patent still. Though it gratifies the wants of persons, it sets a limit to those gratifications. Every one has to give up something which he might have desired if it were not for social considerations (and this is why in the mythology of the social contract primitive men are said to have alienated their natural rights on entering into society); or he may have to stimulate his efforts to bring them to the level of the demands of others. Goodness depends on natural inclinations, but there is a process implied in it of give and take which reconciles conflicting interests. The solitary individual man is not by himself the measure of what is right. And again, though a good man must possess a principle, by which he acts as his own guide through life, we do not suppose that such a principle is something which he creates for himself without regard to a higher law. On the contrary, even a strong wicked man has a method in his wickedness (and only if he has, do we allow him to possess individuality). But his principle is an exclusive and forbidding principle: the good man, on the other hand, while self-contained and acting from intrinsic motives, is an example for the imitation of others. His character is

built upon the law of his fellows, and moulded to suit his duties towards them. Acting upon a principle, he acts upon something which is not merely a personal or peculiar whim, but based on a reasonable regard for others. And as the greatest poems are those which appeal to simple and widely diffused sentiments: and the greatest truths are those of which we can say, "This is what I have been trying to think:" so the greatest individuality is that character in whom are gathered into one clear and concentrated point the dim and scattered hopes and needs and practical sense of a multitude.

The solidarity of conduct may be presented under another form, not in reality different from the above. Neither in knowledge nor in conduct does a man create the whole substance of thought and action afresh. He finds a body of truth and a body of observances ready made, and whatever change he may make must be continuous with what he finds before him. Truth and goodness have a long start of the individual who is to attain them. Hence as a man's knowledge would not exist except for the truth which is already discovered, so he is partly made in character by the surroundings into which he is born. That a man would not be what he is except for the social medium he lives in is a truth which has been so often dwelt upon that there is little need to labour it here. At every step and turn he is dependent upon others, and acquires his knowledge and his character from them. As he derives from his parents his physical existence, so he learns from them goodness; and as life advances, and he extends his social relations from the home to the civic life, he is moulded continually by the institutions and the customs of his society. Take an ordinary Englishman, and how much of his action could you account for supposing the institutions of England were annihilated? Transplant him to another soil, and he would be a different organism. Among the most potent of these institutions (a vague word, comprising all that belongs to culture and

civilisation) are language and literature, which form a kind of medium in which we live and by which we are affected without our knowing it. For language embodies the thoughts and judgments of a whole people, and is the currency in which these thoughts and judgments pass from mind to mind. So dependent is the individual on all these circumstances that he stands in danger of losing or failing to form a distinctive character owing to the force exercised upon him by his surroundings: one of the chief objects of his self-culture is to guard against being reduced into a dull monotonous conformity to the society in the midst of which he is found.

If the merest survey of a 'moral individual's' character, both as to what it is at any moment, and as to how he has acquired it, exhibits this dependence upon other men, the inquiry into the history of mankind only corroborates the same truth. Authorities differ as to the nature of early society, but they never find man existing apart from society of some kind. And, moreover, the further back we trace him, the greater seems to be his dependence on social or tribal observance, the less plastic his character is. It is true that we know little except by inference of the state of man before he arrived at even the lowest stages of which we have evidence; but as little are we entitled to say that in the interval he had that relatively developed nature which would entitle us to consider him as moral at all.

It does not, however, follow from what has been said, that there may not be a difficulty in considering certain kinds of conduct as social. The difficulty will have to be considered later, but it is immaterial for the present chapter, which seeks not to prove that all morality is necessarily social, but to indicate what a mass of evidence in favour of sociality can be appealed to by the ethical doctrine of universalism.

II.—The Movement of Theories.

6. No theory, as remarked above, has failed to take account of both these groups of moral facts. But individualism taking its stand on the first, and universalism on the second, the problem is very differently conceived in the two methods. For the conception of the individual person is very dissimilar, according as we lean to the side of independence or to that of solidarity. According to the first set of facts, the individual is a centre of repulsive forces. "Keep to yourself: you are different from me," is the lesson that, taken by themselves, these facts teach. According to the second, the individual is a centre of attraction—"We stand under the same law," one may say to another, or still more explicitly, "We are joined in a common work, and are bound together." Given the one view, the problem to be solved, then, is, how to do justice to the patent facts upon the other side? The problem for individualism is, given the isolated individual, how account for the solidarity of many individuals? The problem of universalism is, given the solidarity of individual men, how explain their independence? A true statement, it is obvious, must find a place for both groups of facts; but it must do more than merely find a place for them: it must exhibit them in mutual implication—it must show that the true independence means unity with our fellow-men, and that the true solidarity is a union of independent characters. To say that both elements are present is not enough: the truth or untruth of a theory depends on how these elements are combined or connected.

It will throw light on the real nature of the problem to trace rapidly the stages by which, starting with either view of the individual, ethics seeks to satisfy the complementary data. The history of philosophy is often made to stand in place of philosophy, but when studied synthetically it is of the highest value, for it shows how the problems

become modified by taking up a new range of neglected considerations. We shall find individualism becoming more and more socialistic, and universalism becoming more and more conscious of the differences between the components of a society. The two processes illustrate that convergence of opposing methods, described in the Introduction in another connection.

7. The movement of individualism is the more clearly marked of the two. The history of individualism follows the order which a thinker might himself pursue, supposing he started with the fundamental assumption of individualism as a mere hypothesis, and corrected it gradually. The attractive forces of the individual are first subordinated to the repulsive, then raised to a position of equality with them, then practically identified.

Think only of the moral independence and the difference of persons, and you think of society as an aggregate of repellent units, each seeking its own end. It was this which impressed those great English individualists who, from Hobbes to Bentham, upheld a strict doctrine of personal pleasure. Accordingly with their good sense and their acuteness they took whatever ties of attraction they found between persons, and accounted for these charities of life as due to selfish interest. If I do you good it is because your happiness gives me pleasure. Even when Hume finds a place for sympathy which modifies our desires by inducing us to take a general survey of things, he cannot maintain his doctrine without inconsistency, or at any rate ambiguity. Sympathy strictly should affect action only through the pleasure it gives the person who feels it. Benevolence is not desire for another's pleasure, but desire for the pleasure of oneself, which is associated by sympathy with the former pleasure.[1] At the end of the history Bentham places the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number side by side with the doctrine that the proper end of action is each person's own

[1] Cp. Green, *Introduction to Hume*, vol. ii. § 42.

greatest happiness, and leaves them unreconciled.[1] Even Butler must "when he sits down in a cool hour" reduce benevolence to self-love. Benevolence and affection are therefore only refinements of the original repellent force of individuals.

8. It is plain enough that mere refined selfishness is insufficient to explain the social character of goodness. The next stage is therefore to postulate both personal and social impulses, and leave these two forces to coexist. Such a solution may take many forms. We may hold with Mill's generous Utilitarianism that the happiness of others is as much an end to us as our own, however difficult it may be to combine such a position with the assertion that in any action it is pleasure that is sought, an end which can seemingly only be personal. Or, abandoning the doctrine that pleasure is always the object of desire, we may recognise in the individual two concurrent tendencies, one towards his own good, the other towards universal happiness. And while maintaining that a man's interest and the general good are different ideas, we may at the same time believe that not only is "disinterested benevolence generally in harmony with rational self-love," as Butler believed it to be, "but also in another sense and independently rational; that is, Reason shows me that if my happiness is desirable and a good, the equal happiness of any other person must be equally desirable."[2] In this view the individual and the law, though they are on the whole in harmony, remain side by side, and are not reconciled one with the other. The individual, then, instead of being a mere centre of repulsion, has indeed become a centre of attraction as well, but we feel this to be still insufficient. Morality not only holds that I have duties to others as well as to myself, but it maintains that from a moral point of view in doing rightly by them I am for that very reason making the best of myself. To use

[1] Cp. Sidgwick, *History of Ethics*, p. 232.
[2] Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, p. 400, 3rd ed.

the same metaphor, it holds that in maintaining myself as a moral individual, repelling intruders, I am preserving my due relations of attraction towards others.

It might be thought that a person bringing to the problem the conception familiar to evolution of the organic structure of society, would at once effect the required mediation. But though such a thinker could not fail to suggest this result, it is still possible that he should remain at the stage of "attraction and also repulsion." Let us take the authoritative exposition of evolutionary ethics in England. The social factor is duly recognised as an attractive force between individuals. From the earliest beginning of life up to human society two kinds of conduct are found in inseparable connection, the one tending to the welfare of self, the other to the welfare of others. Both egoism and altruism are each of them equally essential both to the individual and to society; and what is more, they imply each other. General happiness depends on a due regard to self—you must be strong and happy if you are to help others. The welfare of each depends on the happiness of the whole: the individual cannot be happy unless his fellows co-operate with him, nor again can he be happy unless his directly altruistic instincts are gratified. Actual morality is a compromise between these two forces of egoism and altruism. Far as this statement is in advance of the doctrine of simple repulsion, it still does not completely reconcile altruism and egoism. For its author still conceives the vitality of the individual taken singly to be the end of all good conduct, and egoism is still declared to be the primary factor with a permanent supremacy over altruism.[1]

9. The final step is taken when the social character of morality receives its full significance. With this step individualism ceases to retain its distinctive character of appealing more strongly to one than to the other of the two groups of moral facts from which we started.

[1] Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, p. 187.

There seems to be a cycle in the fortunes of most theories, the law of which is a "law of three stages." Beginning with the bare and abstract statement of a half truth, they take up bit by bit its complementary truth, and emerge from the state of perplexity or vacillation thus produced into the stage where all the parts are held together in an impartial regard. The impartial doctrine in our present case rightly holds with Mr. Stephen that before we can tell what will suit the ends of the individual we must consider the qualities he actually derives from the organism. It is true that each person seeks his own happiness, but what that happiness is is determined by the sentiments he possesses owing to his functions in society. His character varies with the "social factor," and it is his character which decides what he shall perform. This conception of the determination of the moral individual by his social function Mr. Stephen embodies in the idea of the "social tissue," which is the connecting medium between the individuals—a term invented in order to distinguish the permanent social properties from their special or definite organisations, such as parliament or church, which may, he thinks, vary within the limits of the same social tissue. This tissue, like the connective tissue of the human body, becomes modified into various organs for different purposes. What this tissue really is, is a matter of some uncertainty, but at any rate it is the qualities and sentiments which a man possesses through sharing in this tissue which make him moral, and it is the qualities of the social tissue which the moral law defines.[1] I offer here no criticism of this doctrine: whatever reservations may be needed before all of its details are accepted, it is certain, even from this meagre description, that the problem is here rightly conceived, and a solution given of the difficulty of reconciling the attractive and repulsive forces of the individual man.[2]

[1] Stephen, *Science of Ethics*, chap. iii., iv., 'Social Tissue.'

[2] The same is true of the conception of an extended or tribal self, which

10. Such are the gradations by which the mere abstract problem of individualism is expanded and becomes a real expression of the vital question of ethics—a process which is of all the greater interest because it represents the main current of English moral theory. A similar gradation might be traced in the question proposed to itself by universalism. If the difficulty for individualism was to show the connection of the atom with the whole, for universalism the difficulty is to show how a universal law is embodied in those shifting and multiform duties of highly dissimilar persons which make up the real moral life we know. Towards this problem of what may be described as the articulation of the moral law, the decisive step is taken when the moral law ceases to be regarded as merely something superior to the individual, and acquires the character of a social formula. The first appeal to the facts which make for universalism leaves the moralist with the bare conception that good is something absolutely binding irrespective of the individual's inclinations. In its extremest form this binding law is the dictate of a superior power or governor: reduced to human terms, it dictates to the individual through the conscience or some form of internal sense. In this stage the particular duties which make up life are themselves given by this external or internal monitor—the conscience does not give

W. K. Clifford uses to explain the nature of morality. In so far as the individual man represents the tribal self he is good; in so far as he judges himself or others it is the voice of the tribal self which speaks through him. The conception of an extended self is, however, not elaborated by Clifford, and is altogether in too imperfect and vague a form to be accepted without question; the very phrase "an extended self" implies ideas as to the nature of self which require justification. It is interesting to observe the coincidence of this view with one put forward formerly by Strauss. "Moral action," says Strauss (*Der alte und der neue Glaube*, § 74, p. 159), "is the self-determination of the individual according to the idea of the genus." Strauss represents the Hegelian philosophy in the act of putting off its elaborate and rigid majesty, and submitting to be partial and popular. That one of the highest expressions given to English ethics proper should coincide with a remnant of the Hegelian philosophy is curious in itself, but the strangeness of it ceases when we reflect that the central note of Hegel's idealism was that very principle of development which in a different form has been extended over the natural world by evolution.

general formulas, but pronounces particular enactments. So occupied are the minds of such thinkers with the authoritative character of the law that mere authority seems to carry with it the actual concrete duties, just as the beginnings of individualism subordinated the social good to the central point of interest, the mere individual. Such a solution is too easy to satisfy the mind for long, and a second stage is reached when, the universal or authoritative character of morality as such being retained, its particular enactments are left to be discovered by experience, and the conscience approves what the necessities of life demand.[1] The internal voice and the stronger persuasiveness of actual life are left side by side to settle their differences as they can. Most intuitionist and many idealistic theories are in this condition of peaceful diplomacy between two independent powers.

11. The problem receives its definite shape when the notion that the authority of the law arises from its mere universal form is abandoned. To realise the social character of morality is to seek the explanation of its authority, not in some categorical imperative such as Kant's, but in the very nature of society itself. The change is part of that movement which I have already attempted to describe. Accordingly, in the universalism of our own day it is as fully recognised that the observances of morality are the work of individuals, as that they have a character which is more than merely relative to the person who has to perform them. The moral law is a law of society; but that law has no existence except in the characters of the members of society. "In saying that the human spirit can only realise itself, that the divine idea of man can only be fulfilled, in and through persons, we are not denying but affirming that the realisation and fulfilment can only take place in and through society. Without society no

[1] I have quoted already the use which is made by Dr. Martineau of the consequences of conduct to explain why we do particular acts, while at the same time it is always conscience which supplies authority.

persons: this is as true as that without persons, without self-objectifying agents, there would be no such society as we know."[1] "There can be nothing in a nation however exalted its mission, or in a society however perfectly organised, which is not in the persons composing the nation or the society."[2]

12. It is thus by availing themselves of that commonplace of to-day, the dependence of the individual on the race, that both individualism and universalism have arrived at a statement of their problems which is not one-sided but complete. Goodness is something in which both the individual and society have a part. If, then, we are to profit by the history of ethical theory, it is clear what we must not do, in examining the meaning of moral epithets. We must neither assume that the individual is an independent atom, nor that there is an authoritative and binding command which is given irrespectively of him. On the contrary, we must take society and the individual as we find them in fact, the latter with ties that bind him to others, the former as something which we have never known to be formed by the mere coalescence of separate and independent individuals. The inquiry breaks up into two parts; according as we consider the meaning of right and wrong for any one individual taken by himself, or for society as comprising many individuals; and these two views must be connected one with the other. An analysis of this kind will not set out with the hope of finding any one spring of action like benevolence, or sympathy, under which the whole of our moral action may be grouped; but will aim only at describing what are the facts to which we refer when we call an action or a person good or bad.

[1] Green, *Prolegomena*, p. 199. Cp. p. 192. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

CHAPTER II.

GOOD AND BAD.

I.—In the Individual.

1. (*a.*) *The equilibrium of functions.*—In taking the life of the individual by itself in provisional isolation from society we are making an assumption which is perfectly justifiable. No matter how complex the social connections into which he enters, his own share in them belongs peculiarly to himself. He is indeed dependent on his fellows at every step and turn, and a large part of his inclinations arise directly out of his connection with them: the most permanent and important of all, the feelings of kinship, belong to him as a merely physical being. But these social impulses all have a point of attachment in the individual, and are felt by himself as much as the more obviously self-regarding impulses, which in their turn are properly termed self-regarding, not because they are without effect upon others, but because they are suggested from within rather than from without. For instance, an act of kindness which is felt by the patient as alleviation is felt by the agent himself as sympathy. The individual's life is thus composed of acts which depend on a multitude of feelings, emotions, and impulses—the pressure of hunger and thirst, the need of love, the sympathy which is excited in him by the joys and pains of his fellows, feelings like duty, or self-respect, which are the product of moral development itself, lastly, the impulses to artistic and scientific creation, or the aspirations of religion. Supposing what is not the fact, that all these feelings and the

like never led on to volition, we should have a being which might be pronounced good or bad in the same way as we apply these terms to a plant or lower animal according as it approaches or deviates from the type of its kind. But moral predicates would be inapplicable, because the conditions would be absent upon which they depend.

2. All these various phenomena become moral, as we have shown, when they are made the material of will. In this transformation, to recall the results of a previous inquiry, the suggestion is proposed in ideal distinction from the mind, which thereupon assimilates or rejects it. We have seen that because in this process the agent is aware of the quality of his act, that quality rises to the dignity of value. But the process is merely the condition of moral value: we have now to show how this value is determined. If, taking the individual life, we ask what is implied in attributing to any act, say an act of temperance, that value for goodness which the epithet temperate expresses, the answer is twofold. The first part of the answer is obvious, and need be mentioned only to be dismissed: the act is called for by the circumstances under which it takes place. But it is not necessary to repeat this condition, for a function is never performed except at the suggestion of certain circumstances to which it is appropriate, and its very existence postulates the exciting causes:[1] we cannot eat without food, or be generous when there is no need. The second part of the answer is the vital one, that the act is required by the past and the future needs of the individual, taken as he is with all his faculties. The prudential reasons which are sometimes given for such a virtue are an indication of this: you must be temperate in order to perform your day's work, or to enjoy the pleasures of intellect. In suppressing at the call of family claims a desire for indulgence (in abstaining from another glass of beer, in order to pay the

[1] I shall afterwards discuss the significance of the idea of the adaptation of an act to the conditions which call it forth (Bk. III. ch. i. sec. ii. pp. 271–4).

school-pence of his child), a man acknowledges that each impulse can morally be gratified only if it leaves free room for the other parts of his nature to work when occasion calls. A vice implies a distortion or caricature of the nature, whether in the way of excess or defect, which leaves the complete meaning of the nature undeveloped: vice sins against the dignity of human nature, because it throws the mind off its balance. The measures of praise and blame are determined according to the way in which an action is likely to affect the other capacities of the agent. Benevolence, if gratified beyond a certain point, may cripple the agent's power of making as much of himself as he should, and is then condemned, though up to that point it is approved. The love of honour may be Quixotic, or it may, as in duelling, lead to disregard of those permanent necessities of the individual implied in the right to life and respect for the lives of others. An appetite, harmless in itself, may become an object of censure, if it conflicts with a reasonable amount of consideration for others. It is in this regard, the too much or the too little of a particular kind of activity, which makes the bad act. And there will be acts, like cruelty, of which any amount is too much, because they can never be adjusted to the rest of life. Thus a good act implies an order or system of acts which are regulated by reference to each other. By the success with which it attains the standard required by its own place in this system its goodness is decided. The good life as a whole is a system of conscious acts, where each function has its limits prescribed to it by the demands of all other functions, so that no faculty shall perform its functions to the detriment of another.

In speaking of life as an exercise of faculties, I use the word 'faculty' for convenience sake, and not with a desire to revert to the theory that human nature is composed of a number of faculties. Faculty is a compendious expression for the fact, however it comes into existence,

that there is a permanent mode of activity which the agent exhibits in response to certain conditions which evoke it. It is the acts themselves which constitute the order at whose bar the individual act is summoned for sentence.

3. The goodness of an act, then, appears to depend upon its occupying a definite position in an equilibrated order of action. This definite position it is which gives the action individuality, and at the same time gives it that species of moral value which is expressed by whatever moral epithet (wise, brave, and the like) may be appropriate to it. What is implied in this definite position which the action occupies, and how does it receive its individuality as a contributory element to the total order? The answer is given by bearing in mind that which was shown to be true of all acts of mind, that they were continuous with each other in virtue of what they were, as distinguished from how they happened; that each had a content or character which, being a universal, could connect it with other mental events. Let us apply this to show how the individuality of each act of will is determined by its complex relations of likeness and difference with other actions. For clearness sake I will take a definite example, an act of generosity. The quality of being a free gift which is possessed by the act implies an identity of meaning between itself and acts which resemble it. The quality is universal, and comprehends many resembling though not identical acts within the same formula or law. For things are said to resemble one another which exhibit an identity of character, surrounded with subsidiary characters different in the two cases, but not pertinent to the quality in respect of which they are compared. But in the next place it is implied that the act is included with other and different acts under a more comprehensive law. The general quality of free gift does not exhaust the whole of the act, but there are other elements in the content, namely, the circumstances under which the free gift is made, and these circumstances are themselves universal

in character. Let us say, the gift, or loan, is made to a person who is struggling to maintain an honest existence, but lacks the means of making a start. The will to assist such a person, entering into the composition of the act, places the act in relation with acts which bear the general character of helping to the self-maintenance of human beings. As such it comes under the same head with the will to earn your own livelihood, and because of this can be compared with it, and may conflict with it. But observe that the act in question is called generous (with its implied idea of goodness) only if it takes due account of all circumstances. A free gift does not make generosity, but it is generous because it is given to such and such persons, for such and such purposes. It is the whole act which is viewed by the moral judgment, and all this complex of meaning enters into the meaning of the act, or into its quality. By the fact that the quality of generosity includes all these universal characters which make up the nature of the act, the act itself not only resembles all other acts of which the general character is that of free gift to a deserving object, but stands in connection with every other act which arises in the individual's moral life. It is the consideration of the other needs of life, for instance, in our case, what I can afford to give, which carries with it the consequence that a moral act, by the very fact that it is generous, or temperate, or the like, takes due account of all those relations in which it stands to other needs, from which other volitions arise. The good act is thus an act which throws out a thousand feelers to every part of a man's life, doing so, as before explained, in virtue of the universality of the elements which make up its meaning; and if all these relations could be explained in detail, then to know any one act of a good man's life would be to know the whole ideal of goodness, at any one stage of moral progress. By these relations it takes its definite position in the individual law or scheme which constitutes the agent's character.

4. In this order or system, every member is determined by its relations to the rest; or to speak in con c we have an orderly life in which every requirement of the individual's nature is satisfied so far as is compatible with the rest. The result is an adjustment of the elements of the nature (that is, of the acts summarised under their elements) to one another, so that they mutually limit one another, and every one of them is advanced so far as consists with a like claim to advancement on the part of the others. What is the regulating principle of this order? It is the formula or law of the order itself. It implies the establishment of a proportion between its various members. In this proportion or adjustment consists the reasonableness, the rationality of good conduct (proportion = *ratio*, λόγος); and in this sense reason may be called the regulative principle of morality.

The proposition is, however, often maintained in a different form, according to which reason as a faculty of the mind is regarded as the author of the moral order. This assertion seems to rest upon a misconception of the true significance of reason, properly so-called. Reason has, it is true, a very important place in the determination of conduct. It is, first, the instrument of deliberation, and in two ways. It has the office of resolving an end proposed into the means which are needed for its execution. And besides this merely discursive or analytic function of reasoning, it is needed in tracing the bearings of an act upon the rest of the life of the agent himself and of others. It has to combine the contingencies of life together, and to discover the full character of any proposed conduct. Irrespective of deliberation there is, however, a still higher form in which morality depends upon reason, though not different in kind from the use which has last been mentioned. Morality cannot advance beyond a very low stage of complexity without the use of general conceptions, which involve the operation of reason upon moral experience, from the conceptions

of convenience, generosity, cowardice, and the like, up to such highly ideal conceptions as expedience, duty, or good.

But the indispensableness of reason for conduct which has any degree of complexity does not show that the principle of morality is the result of reason. Set two dogs to divide between them a certain portion of food. They will come to a certain division, founded doubtless on their strength or rapidity, which, if men were concerned, and there were no other considerations involved, would be called an equitable division. No one would say that reason decided the distribution. Yet a large part of elementary morality is settled by a compromise not unlike that of the dogs. In fact, reason as a special function of the mind exhibits only in the highest form the same principle as is discerned in all mental processes—that it is by their contents or characters that they are combined and related—no matter whether they are mere sensations, or perceptions, or abstract thoughts. In the case of the dogs, the compromise is a result of certain sensations of gratified appetite, mingled perhaps with rapid intuitions as to when it is dangerous to try to get more. It is the kind of sensations they have which determines the action. In general it is always by the contents of its phenomena that the mind conducts its operations. In sensations the mind feels them, in perceptions it objectifies them, in idea the content is what we must call an *ideatum*. In reasoning the contents are thought of, they are present to the mind and combined or compared as such. Or the contents or characters by which in lower stages the mind operates are in reason proper the explicit object of thought, and as such are known as general concepts. It is natural, therefore, though erroneous, to regard the adjustment of conduct, which we have seen to arise out of its relations of character or content, as the special work of reason. Whenever such language is employed, it must be understood as indicating not the operation of a superior faculty, but the proportion or reasonableness which is characteristic

of an organised whole, and is no more specially the work of reason than of any other mental activity.

5. It has been taken for granted already that the order or system of volition contains groups of resembling elements. Every act has that degree of individuality which prevents it from complete identification with any other, but similar conditions require a similarity of response on the part of the agent. The moral man agrees in this with every other organism, the organs of which, though discharging different functions on the whole, and never repeating exactly identical acts, have a permanence of character peculiar to themselves—the arm grasps, the heart beats, and so on. In the moral system the permanence of action under like conditions forms what is known as a *habit* of good action, that is, the permanent choice of conduct which is reasonable, or which, in other words, being appropriate to the circumstances which evoke it, is adjusted to the rest of a man's activities. These groups of similar actions follow minor or subordinate formulas or laws, which may be compared with delegations of the central principle of the whole character: or more aptly still, these habits may be represented as the separate constituencies, whose individual votes are put together and compared in order to determine the decision of the whole system.

6. The good character by conformity to which any act is judged as good or bad is thus an order or systematic arrangement of volitions as above defined. Any character, whether good or bad, consists of the various conscious acts which, by their connection with one another, and the promise they contain of future action, present a man as embodying a law or plan, whatever that plan may be. In the good character all the parts consist with one another.

Before passing on it is right to observe that this account of good character uses ideas which apply *mutatis mutandis* to the life of any organism as well as to the mind of man. It has, in fact, simply explained in terms

of human experience the elements involved in the vitally important conception of organisation. What then is the difference between this moral organisation of volition and any similar organisation lower down in the scale of creation? It lies simply in the difference of the elements of the order, and whatever follows therefrom. The elements of the moral order are conscious actions, in the sense, so often explained, of actions in which the agent is aware of, though he does not necessarily reflect upon, the character of his object. Because it is a system of conscious acts, this order stands distinguished from all other orders of which the elements are different: the significance of the individual function in the latter becomes in the former the moral value of the individual volition. The distinction is one of fact, and it depends upon the distinction in the complexity of the phenomena to which the respective orders refer. We are not to imagine that the idea of order is in any way connected with that ideal distinction of the object proposed from the present feeling which characterises volition. The human end is often distinguished from the animal end by the circumstance that a man is conscious of his life as a whole, the animal has no such idea. But the possibility that a man should have his end as a whole before his mind is a further development, by the help of higher faculties, of the original consciousness which makes his life moral at all; and that possibility not only is not always, but on the whole is seldom realised.

7. (*b.*) *The equilibrium of structure.*—It cannot, however, be denied that this manner of representing the good character offers difficulties. There is a strangeness in speaking of character as a system of volitions. It will be asked, is not this description more appropriate to good conduct than to the good man? And further, granting the truth of this description of character, is the order in question supposed to be present at once, or is it a series in time? And if it is a series in time, how can it be a unity?

To the former question the answer has been already supplied when it was explained how conduct and character were identical, the same thing considered in different relations. The second objection proves too much. It would deny the unity of the growing plant or animal, whose functions are certainly successive. What lies at the base of such an objection is the belief that a series in time cannot be a unity—we suppose that if there were a mere succession of volitions there could be no unity of them. But why should the fact that mental events occur in time, and that time indeed is made known to us through our mental succession, be a bar to the unity of those events in our mind? The material parts of a body which are separated from each other in space can yet form together a unity of extension defined by its boundaries. They can do so, partly at any rate, by virtue of the character they possess of what I can only call 'spatiality.' Why should not a series of mental events form a unity though in time, and indeed in virtue of their successiveness? The unity conditioned by space is an extended unity. The unity conditioned by time is a unity of succession.

8. These considerations are, however, chiefly metaphysical in character. The objection gathers its strength from a persuasion that the good character should more properly be described by the feelings or sentiments which it possesses at any one time, by its structure rather than by its functions. Now this claim is perfectly legitimate, and it has not been possible to explain the order of good conduct without reference to the structure of the mind. Good conduct is built upon a man's needs or his desires, and is defined as satisfying every part of his nature in its proportion. Morality establishes therefore an equilibrium or balance between the parts of a man's nature, understanding by that expression the various feelings, love, hunger, anger, and the like, which are gratified by action, and including in them not only personal wants, but susceptibilities to the needs of others. Instead of a balance

between the parts of a man's nature, we can more properly speak of a man's moral structure as the moral sentiments which are not merely motives, but feelings directed towards certain actions, and in the conscience we shall see how this structure exhibits itself in the moral life. Morality means, therefore, an equilibrium of the moral sentiments, and conversely any sentiment is moral which can be equilibrated with the rest. Both in speaking of the parts of the nature and of the sentiments as the structure of the mind we have to remember that the expression is metaphorical, and derived from the analogy of the body: we are not to suppose that the mind is an extended substance, that feelings exist side by side like the parts of the body.

9. The relation between these three orders of adjustment, namely, of the emotions, of the moral sentiments, and of the parts of conduct, may be illustrated from any machine, or any animal organism. In a locomotive, for instance, we have first of all the iron and steel parts fitted so as to work upon each other: we have, next, these parts in motion shifting their positions but retaining their balance: lastly, we have the work done by the machine, which is the transformation of the energy supplied by the fuel. In any organism we have again the bodily structure which is examined by morphology: these structures in their motions or physiological functions: and the sets of adjusted acts of conduct by which, when suggestions are supplied, the organism reacts. Each lower order serves as structure for the higher order which represents its functions, and in each case the adjustment of the functions maintains the balance of the structure. It is the work done by the engine at any one moment which keeps its parts in equilibrium in their motions: in like manner it is in the moral act itself that the moral sentiments are preserved in their equilibrium. The man who working hard for an income is entitled to spend freely on others, keeps his sentiments of acquisition and of generosity in their proportion. Further, the round of adjusted duties through

which a man goes in his life corresponds to the repeated work of the engine in driving the wheel; and as this succession of movements maintains the equilibrium of the structure, so, as the successive parts of conduct are performed, the various sentiments, though perpetually shifting among themselves, always maintain their balance. Where the man or the organism differs from the machine, besides the fact of growth, is in the variety of the kinds of conduct performed, and the complexity of the rhythm. The act of the engine is one and the same—the turning of the wheel, which may be resolved into the two movements of the piston, its push and its withdrawal, and this period of action is repeated in a monotonous rhythm. With man the period is much greater: many different acts are to be performed, though the lowest kinds of organism have only a very short period. And secondly, he does not go through the round of his acts one after the other and then repeat them, but his acts are repeated in different proportions according to a complicated rhythm, as, *e.g.*, he will eat thrice a day but walk once. But in the moral man, as in the engine, there is the same regularity of conduct, and the same adjusted order of actions in which the balance of the structure is preserved.

With these illustrations, it is not necessary to insist that the equilibrium of moral sentiments is not a state of rest, but a mobile equilibrium in which all the parts are shifting. And it will be understood that the equilibrium is a balance of the parts with one another, not simply an equilibrium of a man with his conditions. Every such equilibrium will indeed imply an adaptation to conditions, but such adaptation means that under the conditions the structure maintains its balance within itself. The mammoth, to take the negative case, requiring for its vast body more food than it can get, can maintain neither its physiological functions of nutrition and muscular activity in equilibrium, nor the parts of its body in their proper balance.

10. The good man may therefore be described either as an equilibrated order of conduct, or an equilibrium of moral sentiments, or of the parts of his nature. Nevertheless the order of conduct is a prior conception to the structural equilibrium. In the machine the combination of the parts is made in order to produce the motion of the engine, and conversely it is by this motion that the equilibrium of the parts is maintained. In the organism the bodily structure retains its proportion only in so far as it is in physiological action, and this physiological action subserves the conduct of the organism. The very meaning of natural selection is that only those structures are preserved which are able to perform certain functions. In like manner the equilibrium of the moral sentiments exists only through conduct, and it is determined by the requirements of conduct. How the equilibrium is effected does not concern us at present. It is of course effected simultaneously both for conduct and the moral structure. Hence given a certain disposition, the corresponding conduct follows with certainty: given a certain conduct, it must have proceeded from the corresponding disposition. But every one of the sentiments which enters into this structure is defined by the corresponding part of conduct with which it is bound up. And if we take the structure at any one moment we shall find sentiments entering into it which can only be understood as a preparation for certain conduct which is not yet called for, but will be in the future, as when a man thinks it his duty to secure an income out of regard for the duties which he will have to perform towards his children.

11. To recapitulate—In judging an act to be good we imply its adjustment to an order in which every faculty is exercised compatibly with the rest. A completely good man would be a man whose every act is of this kind, and every man is good in so far as his acts conform to this adjustment. A bad act, on the other hand, is one which fails of adjustment, and a man is bad in proportion to the

failure. The conception of a man's character is represented under the name of an *ideal*—a plan of conduct or way of life upon which he acts. A bad man's way of life is his ideal as much as the good man's, and every one of his acts implies such an ideal. The plan of conduct is called an ideal because it is a complex of conscious acts, each of which is present in idea before it is carried into effect. The good man's life is the good or moral ideal. It is therefore not called an ideal to imply that it is unattainable. On the contrary, every man acts on his own ideal, and the good man realises the moral ideal. It is all the more necessary to insist upon what it is that gives an ideal its name, because the good ideal, as it has been described, is really something hypothetical: it is ideal in the sense that it is never fully attained. It is hypothetical in two ways. It supposes, in the first place, that every member of the order is good; and, in the second place, it supposes that the order itself remains permanent throughout the series. This double ideality it is important to recognise; but it is no less important to observe that the ideal is a realised ideal.

12. The first characteristic of the ideal is obvious. Experience does not present us with a life every act of which is good. We are all more or less bad. But in every good act the ideal is realised. The good act is the act which has the shape it would wear in the ideal order: though it is adjusted to imaginary elements it realises the whole so far as its own particular share is concerned. Who would say that a project involving many steps, of which only the first few were taken and the rest abandoned, was not so far actually realised? The realisation of the ideal moral order is signified in the form of the judgment which declares the act to be good.

The second ground of ideality is more important and interesting. The picture drawn of the good individual supposes morality to be unprogressive. It contemplates a series, but supposes that the successive members of the

series are known, and that no new conditions will intervene. The mere standard changes, but in judging an act good we arrest its change for a moment. The responsibility for doing so rests with the moral judgment and not with me. The conception of the moral order is ideal, because it does not cover all the phenomena of morality. To use a metaphor, it is a section taken at one point across the course of morality. It is an ideal which is not completely realised because it is a limited ideal. The moral life we know is in motion, but the conception used by the moral judgment is not dynamical, but statical. Here, as before, the ideal is none the less a realised ideal, because no man has ever seen it in fact. An act which is good is *ipso facto* a member of such an order, though the other elements of the order exist only in the ideas of men. The act itself consists, we will say, in defending an exposed position, and is defined by what it is: it is a good act, an act of bravery, in respect of its satisfying the conditions of this ideal order, which is therefore realised in it. Were it not for this ideal, its bravery could never be recorded in the moral judgment.

13. Let us look more closely at this last assumption contained in the conception of an order of volitions. The data are the known wants and impulses of human nature. In founding upon them an ideal of conduct we make the assumption that these impulses will recur in a manner analogous to our past experience. In other words, we assume our activities to be known, and life to be a repeating series of them, as hunger and thirst recur at certain intervals. The assumption is justified by the moral judgment, which supposes that the circumstances of action are calculable. We do not hold a person morally responsible in respect of consequences which could not be foreseen, nor again in respect of motive for a mistake which he could not prevent in estimating the nature of what he is doing. In our moral judgments we do limit the area of circumstance, and to this practice

the ideal order corresponds; for the calculation of consequences of action depends on the knowledge we have of human nature. The hypothetical picture which the moral judgment draws of the good character exhibits the human nature as a closed cycle of appetites, impulses, and the like, which go through their course and rhythmically return. The moral life is the revolution through this adjusted series of acts.

II.—In Society.

14. (*a.*) *Social equilibrium.*—Having inquired what the goodness of an act means in the good individual, we have now to ask the same question in respect of society. In a previous chapter the evidence has been given upon which the social conception of moral life is based, and that evidence is sufficient to demonstrate the truth of the conception in the greater part of conduct. Taking advantage of this, I shall give first an analysis of the meaning of good, which is borne out by the obviously social portion of conduct, and afterwards show that it applies to all the rest of conduct, by proving that the apparent exceptions to sociality are not really such.

Society is composed of many individuals. The very existence of the moral predicates involves in the first instance a plurality of persons, understanding by a person a being, the subject of volition, whose acts form a continuous context, which we call a moral character. The grounds upon which we ascribe to others a personality like our own cannot be discussed here; but the fact that we pass moral judgment upon one another is itself one of the most important and striking evidences for the truth of our belief. Certain it is that the moral judgment "this is good" or "bad" supposes such a plurality of persons who are able to understand each other. The mere impulse to drink is a matter which concerns only

the individual himself, but so soon as it is gratified, and its gratification becomes the occasion of approval as temperance, it is something in which all have an interest. This common interest may make itself felt upon the drunkard in the displeasure of public opinion; and whatever be the true relation of punishment to morality, so much at least is true, that the act is reprehensible, because the common interest of many persons requires a different form of conduct. We may indeed amuse ourselves by asking what the life of a solitary human being would be, but the question is as unanswerable as the inquiry, what history might have been if Waterloo had been won by Napoleon, or Marathon by the Persians, or as the familiar question of the nursery, what we should do for drink under certain contingencies, when nothing fit to drink was to be had. The case has not occurred. Man is not known to us apart from his fellows, and the only solitary human beings of whom we know have brought with them moral ideas from their education. Part of the objective character we ascribe to morality arises from its being a requirement of an aggregate of persons. Moral approbation is accorded, not by the individual merely, but by others as well; and even when the judgment is left to the conscience, yet the conscience is never independent of social judgment.

15. But the predicate 'good' applied to an action involves more than the bare fact of a common interest of several individuals. It means that the act is one by which the agent seeks to perform the function required of him by his position in society. The conception of "efficiency," which was adopted by Clifford to express the moral ideal, expresses what is required by the moral judgment of every act. Such efficiency depends upon two things, that each person has a definite place which requires of him a determinate work; and secondly, that what that work is is settled by reference to the conflicting claims of all, or to the demands of the whole society.

It is sometimes said that it is determined by the requirements of a common good, but that conception is too reflective to be used at this early stage, and must wait for its own explanation. It is enough that no act is regarded as good which does not at once satisfy the agent's position in the whole, and maintain a certain relation between him and others, which secures them a like freedom in their work. Taking any society as it stands, we find that there are two conditions which all good conduct must fulfil: it must secure certain claims or wants on the part of the person who is performing it, but these claims must be such as are compatible with similarly recognised efforts on the part of all others. Everybody's work is different, but the duties of all are mutually involved.

16. The two parts of this statement correspond to very important and familiar phenomena of morality. The latter is the more obvious. Common morality holds that no act is good which in the first place interferes with another man's powers of good action, or which in the next place is not serviceable to the interests of society, under whatever form those interests are conceived. Both these points need explanation. As to the first: there are of course many cases in which what might otherwise be legitimate or good acts on the part of good men are sacrificed to higher ends. But in these cases there is no interference with such men's powers of good action, for granted that the end in question is higher, the good man will acquiesce in the limitation upon himself as right.[1] As to the second: the difficulty presented by the pursuit of art or science, or other apparently quite personal ends, will be cleared up later. Apart from this, it is certain that a man who withdraws from practical life, but serves no other purpose whatever, has never been approved in any age. The ascetics of the fourth and fifth centuries devoted themselves to what was in the conception of their age a noble life.

[1] A not perfectly good man might maintain, however, that it was not his *interest*. This will be discussed later, ch. iv. sec. iii., p. 178, and Book III. ch. ii. sec. ii.

17. It is more important to emphasise the other condition implied in the moral judgment, that everybody's work is different. The acts which are approved are never, as a matter of fact, identical for two individuals. Every individual acts under his own special conditions of personal characteristics and outward surroundings; and though his duties may be practically indistinguishable from those of another individual, they are no more the same than any two acts he himself performs are the same. Morality, like history, never repeats itself. An act of generosity performed by one man might, if repeated by another, be absolutely condemned. It may be positively wrong for me to do what I would do if I were in your place, to give, say, to a stranger who would resent it, help which I think his friend ought to give. Morality says the act is to be done by him and not by me. The practice of celibacy, to borrow an instance from Mr. Stephen, would, if it were universal, lead to the destruction of the race, and common sense would not fail to reprobate it. Not even in the age of asceticism was such conduct counselled as one of universal application: it applied to special cases in the same way as respect for the conscience of a Quaker might excuse him from bearing arms in a country which practised general military service. Yet the moral law allows that some persons are more serviceable to society and mankind if unrestrained by such intimate ties. It is so far from being true that morality is no respecter of persons, that it is always a respecter of persons. It does not require from a man of small powers or opportunities the same service as from one of great powers or opportunities: it only requires both to do the work for which they are fitted. "They also serve who only stand and wait." Children are members of the moral order, but we expect little from them, and we have milder terms of disapprobation for their wrong-doing ('naughty' instead of 'wicked'). Every man is judged on his own merits, though there

are stringent limits, fixed by the moral judgment itself, within and beyond which no excuse is accepted on the ground of imperfections for which he is not responsible. Conversely duty demands from a man of larger mould a larger achievement, and claims heroism from the hero as due to the measure of his endowments.

This does not deny the truth that there is a common character, an identity in actions, which allows moral precepts to be stated in the form of a general proposition; but the moral precept itself is always individual, "this is good or bad." In saying this we do not of course mean that each person is free to construct his own moral precepts, and justify it by his particular motive, for we have seen that the motives do not enter into the judgment except when they make a difference to the act. It means only that general moral rules can be useful only as guides for discriminating the conditions which are met by certain kinds of action; but that every good act stands upon its own feet, and is determined by the conditions out of which it arises.[1]

18. In every good action the agent has a double character of co-operation and exclusion. He is co-operative so far as by his act he contributes to the good of the whole: he is exclusive because this very contribution means that he asserts for himself his own position in the society. In speaking thus of the individual's preserving by good action his proper position, I do not contemplate every man as born to a certain station in life which he must not seek to transcend. The term place or position is employed merely to signify the different *vocations* which are determined for persons by differences in what they bring with them to the service of morality —gifts of nature, such as talent, physical strength, emotion, and the like, and of fortune and opportunity.

[1] I say the "conditions out of which it arises:" for an act may, as we shall see later, produce new conditions which do not affect the judgment of the act. They are not essential to the judgment; but they change the requirement of morality for the future.

Quietism is as far removed from the theory of morality as it is from the sober judgment of mankind. On the contrary, morality insists that a man's vocation shall vary according to his gifts, and we recognise not only a freedom but a duty for a man to alter his place in life if he has the special qualification, and the change is otherwise possible. To do the duty that lies next to him is a rule of life from which a man has to be very careful indeed before he deviates; but sometimes, in order to find the duty that lies next to him, he must go away and put himself next to *it*. What morality requires is that each person should find his place in a manner compatible with the same claims on the part of all,—the highest specialisation being identical with the completest unity. It thus involves an equilibrium between the members of the society,—an order or system in which the functions of each are maintained.

19. The genesis of this equilibrium is a question to be discussed hereafter. But it will make the conception clearer to glance at what is implied in the equilibrium when it is once established. Social arrangements arise from the multiplex and highly various needs of its members. Moral precepts are judgments which guide us in giving utterance to these needs in conduct. Such precepts express the proportion in which individuals are adjusted one to the other, the adjustment taking place on the basis of these needs and impulses. A similar adjustment is implied in every organic order, animal or otherwise. It is not therefore that we may distinguish the moral order of society as a totally unique organisation, but with a view to the peculiar nature of its members, that I insist that in human society the adjustment considered by morality is effected in the form of volitions, in which we can distinguish a basis which is simply given, and a modification of that basis by its direction to certain objects, as so often explained. To determine how far these given materials of volition are

shared with us by the animals is out of my province. It is certain, however, that the suggestions of conduct are as natural to us as their wants are to the animals. The social sentiment itself, which adds so enormously to the range of our needs, which enables us to organise every class for the production of the commodities of life, and is at the root of patriotism and justice, is an extension of the original blood relation between members of the family.[1] But wherever we draw the line between the wants of the animal and the man, it is not man's wants that are moral, but the conduct by which they are satisfied. In calling this conduct good, it is implied that a relation is established between myself and another by virtue of which, in the satisfaction of my need, his also is satisfied. The conduct is good because it establishes this relation, because it compels me and him to do different actions which satisfy the requirements of us both.

20. We might figure the matter thus: considering for the moment only two persons, they may be represented by points round each of which revolves an arm varying in length at each instant. The uncertain shifting of the radius in length and direction round the centre might represent the action which each might perform, supposing he could gratify his need in whatever way he chose. The moral relation is set up when by the act of revolution the two arms coincide: my need is gratified in a certain way, and his need as well: we have met in a common direction, and our arms touch each other, but by this very act we are determined to the distant ends of the line. We embrace as it were at arm's length, and we repel each other in our agreement.

In this way we may represent the relation of a good act, as between two individuals, to all possible bad acts, possibilities, be it observed, which are not supposed to have necessarily taken place in reality. If we are to represent what good means in society as a whole we must change

[1] Darwin's *Descent of Man*, p. 105, ed. 2. (Part I. c. iv.)

the figure, for we have now not merely one need to satisfy with a second person, but many needs with many persons. We can borrow a hint from the graphic method used by chemists to express the combination of atoms in a molecule, each atom having 'bonds' which are supposed to be satisfied by similar bonds possessed by the other atoms. We must suppose every point sending out arms in many directions to other points to coincide with similar arms from them. The figure will then represent the relations which constitute a society at any one moment. The processes of adjustment represented in the first figure by the revolutions of the arms are supposed completed. If two arms sent out from two points to each other did not coincide, but intersected, we should have the claims and needs of the persons (and of the whole society) satisfied differently from what morality requires, or in other words there would be a maladjustment.

21. (*b.*) *All morality social.*—This description will seem sufficient in the case of acts which arise from directly altruistic impulses. An act of generosity to a deserving person springs out of a need on his part for the help of another, and on my part out of a kindly feeling. By the performance of the act his wants are relieved, while at the same time the demands made upon me are fulfilled, and both parties are reciprocally furthered, each in his respective place. The bond which connects us is the good act. But there are many cases in which it is not so obvious that there is any social relation concerned. A great part of conduct is made up of self-regarding acts, the most striking character of which is their highly personal character. This personal character varies in intensity from such fundamental self-regarding conduct as temperance, or prudence, or personal courage, to purity of heart and thought at the other end of the scale. In all these cases there seems to be a want of active suggestion on the part of the agent,

but none on the part of others, and it is therefore not so plain that a relation is established by the good act between him and them. And it is characteristic of modern or Christian feeling to base the wrongness of such acts as suicide, which formerly were regarded as wrongs against society, on personal grounds, because they violate the respect due to the human life as such, or still more to human worth. To so fine a point may this personal idea be sharpened that there are not a few who would countenance such acts, provided the person has convinced himself that life is for him not worth living. Conduct becomes apparently more non-social still when others have no means of becoming aware of it, as in secret thoughts. These raise the wider question of how far an act in general can be called social when it is unknown. Lastly, there are activities comprehended in the ideal of perfection, those of art and science, on which we do pronounce moral judgments, but which it does not seem natural to think of as social in character. In all these cases it is necessary to show that there is a social relation contained if we are to justify the general description of the meaning of good.

22. Taking the self-regarding virtues in general, and omitting the complication derived from their possible secrecy, the clearest way of seeing their social character is to consider them first in their palpable and crudest forms, and then see how continuous the transition is from these forms to the most idealised acts. Nothing is easier than to show the importance of the self-regarding virtues for society, the very existence of which depends upon the observance of, *e.g.*, the primitive rules of temperance and courage, no matter how crudely these virtues are in any stage of society conceived. But they are not simply necessary for the preservation of the society from foreign enemies: every violation of them disturbs the relations of the individual members to one another. It is hardly necessary to mention the confusion of family and friendly connections which is created by an act of intemperance.

Now this second consideration exhibits an advance upon the former, the claims of the separate individuals being conceived rather than those of the whole society. It is this process which goes on continuously until it produces the intensely personal and private character of the more ideal duties, a process which represents the advance from savage life with its want of independence to the highly plastic and self-conscious life of the civilised man. Compare, at one end of the scale, the courage of a man fighting for his country with an act of moral courage in resisting a temptation, at the other end. There are all intermediate stages, as the idea which fills the mind of the individual changes its centre from the society as a whole to himself as an individual, bound to maintain the ideal order in his own person. Instead of fighting for his country, he will speak out in support of a cause which he believes just, or an institution in which he has an interest, or he will defend himself against any one who attacks his rights, or he will retort with indignation upon any one who wounds him in a cherished feeling, until in the end he will turn his arms against himself. Our self-regarding duties may thus be proved to be other-regarding duties at various stages of refinement. If they all of them alike seem to be so little social in character it is because as the individual becomes the centre of interest they concern him in relations which extend beyond the most familiar form of society, the nation, and bind him simply as a man with other men. And this is what we mean when we consider them as prescribed by respect for humanity or for ourselves as types of humanity. They do not cease to be social because they embrace an always larger society: nor be it observed do they cease to be duties to the particular society in which a man lives. Duties which are so fundamental that they are found wherever the same "social tissue" exists do not cease to be duties towards the smaller society in which a man lives. Every smaller organism, say a college, has duties which specially concern

itself, and it has duties which concern many other people as well, but these also concern its members in their relation to one another as a particular case of a more general rule.

23. It is plain that this account applies not only to the lowest but to the highest forms of self-regarding acts. The moral approval passed upon these last means that in their case too certain highly ideal needs on the part of the agent himself, and of others as well, are satisfied by the good act. Consider now the question of whether an act is social though it is secret, like the suppression or the encouragement of a private thought. Can a man be regarded as entering into social relations when his act is quite unknown to others. The question is a general one; how can we explain that we condemn ourselves for many an act which no one else need ever hear of? A man lays a skilful trap for another, into which the latter falls, and the result is imputed merely to accident. A general defending a fortress offers on a stormy day to the besieging commander to surrender it by treachery, and a flash of lightning comes out of heaven and consumes them both, so that nothing is ever heard of the treachery. Another is aware of a talent which no one else suspects, but never cultivates it. In all these cases we should say wrong has been committed, but how can there have been a social relation where the circumstances were never known? Now as to the question of knowledge two things must be observed. (1.) The knowledge we possess of any action is a matter of degree: my actions are known to my friends, but the man in the street does not care about them, and I should resent it if he did. In order to judge an action we do not suppose the whole nation looking on. (2.) And we have to remember, secondly, that our personal morality has not grown in a day, but as it has grown more and more complex the direct observance of action by others becomes more and more limited, until in the end it is only the individual himself who can pass the moral judgment. Hence in the

cases quoted we leave the actual moral judgment to be passed by the man's own conscience, conscience being, as we shall see, the vicegerent of the moral law. The question of knowledge may therefore be dismissed (though it may very well affect another point, the relation of the individual *interest* and the social good). Acts which are wrong when nobody knows them but the agent have come to be so by a process beginning with simple acts which are known, that is, known in their outward appearance.

The process by which this result has been attained I must pass over without more detail. But though we need not thus be troubled by the absence of knowledge, in all cases of secret action there is a social relation effected. And it is because this is so, and has been discovered to be so, that a moral quality attaches to the act where it is unknown. The act, if a bad one, lowers; if a good one, maintains or raises the efficiency of the agent. Sometimes the effect is palpable in his other actions—a man who lives on building castles in the air may render himself unequal to active life. Sometimes the sense of wrong-doing may take the heart out of him, and slacken his energies. But even in respect of the action itself he has made himself a different person, he has altered his efficiency for society, and has taken up towards others a different social position. Though known only to himself, and though it may be very inappreciable, the difference is there. It is because of the actual alteration in a man's character which such action involves that it is included amongst those energies which he has to adjust to other persons' needs, and is therefore called moral or immoral.

24. To pursue the ends of art and science is a moral duty for the individual, according to the measure of his capacities. Can we say that such pursuit involves a reference to society? That to call it social is strange, and almost paradoxical, cannot be denied; but that the assertion is true, that in endeavouring after truth and

beauty a man is in reality performing a social duty, can, I think, be demonstrated. The social character of the act, little as it commends itself at first sight, rests on no other basis, as I believe, than the social character of the most obviously altruistic conduct.

The exact relation of art and science to morality is properly a matter for discussion in connection with the moral end. Here we can observe, however, that the moral judgment is not passed upon the work of art, or of science, in respect of their beauty or truth, but in respect of the will involved in their production. The duty of the artist and the man of science is not measured by his insight into beauty or truth, but given the insight into what is beautiful and true, his duty is to produce it, and besides that, so to regulate himself that this insight may be improved and perfected. What is good in him is in other words the single-hearted devotion with which he pursues his object, following always the directions pointed out to him by his natural or cultivated gift, on the one hand disregarding the temptations to a less laborious life, and it must be added, on the other hand, ready in his turn to sacrifice his most cherished impulse at the call of some other duty, which can rightly present itself as imperative, and therefore higher. If this is allowed, the duty of the artist to his art is analogous to every other duty, which also is directed to its object for its own sake. And the difficulty of recognising its social character is the same as confronted us in the most refined and idealised self-regarding duties. The identity is complete in all respects. There is a directly social value in the pursuit of art, and this social value drops out of sight because of its ideal character.

25. The social character of art does not arise from the fact that the artist depends upon society, and could not produce without society, but is something simpler. I do not mean to inquire what gives the true or the beautiful its real character. But the social uses of the true or

beautiful are as apparent as those of temperance or courage. Some forms of art are of direct utility (and conversely their usefulness depends on the skill with which they are executed); and the same is true of the results of science. Sometimes they are the means of giving pleasure to others, whatever the nature of the pleasure may be. Just as the temperate man is praised according to the way he behaves towards food or drink which makes him directly useful to society, so the first and crudest grounds of the moral character of the artist is his relation to something useful or pleasant to others. But there is a higher ground. The artist enters into a social relation because the work of art appeals to the impulse in himself and others to the production and enjoyment of beauty, and satisfies the craving arising from that sense. That it does this does not make the work beautiful, but it makes the artist's act moral, and he is judged in the same way as the man who in striving after purity of heart is doing justice to an ideal impulse in mankind. He acts up to the ideal of a dignity which seems personal and peculiar because it does not appeal only to his society. But like all other such aspirations, the effort after beauty and truth is included in the moral judgment, which surveys human nature and seeks to develop all its faculties in equilibrium, and that the judgment of such effort can often only be left to the artist himself results from the gradual transference of moral judgment from outwards to within the individual.

26. Some of the most knotty questions of actual practice arise in connection with art and science. Sometimes a man's efforts after truth or science are a complete failure except for himself; so far as others are concerned he produces nothing which can be of service to them. Perhaps his work may be destroyed by an accident. It is none the less impossible to regard his work as "sheer loss or waste." He is simply in the position of a man who has done his duty up to the extent of his powers, and has satisfied the claims which society makes of him on account of

them. The same thing may occur, as we have seen, with any other capacity. The moral judgment, if it were in the habit of dwelling on the moral aspect of art, would call such an artist good in respect of what he has done.

Art and science being in this sense social, the difficulties which the pursuit of them offers to the moral judgment have to be decided on their own merits like any other duty. A man with signal abilities so devotes himself to self-culture that he fails to produce anything worthy of his powers. The judgment is excessively difficult to make: it will depend on how far the effect produced by his self-culture on himself and on others, both directly through contact with his mind, and indirectly through the example of his devotion to truth, are a sufficient compensation for his failure to produce some palpable result. The difficulty of judging is increased by our ignorance of what such a man's powers may have been: such want of knowledge does not alter the value of his life for good or bad, but only makes it more dangerous for a stranger to judge. In general, I think morality is inclined to judge severely the pursuit of mere individual self-culture, or at any rate to censure until a case is made out upon the other side. That which it approves is the self-culture which is undertaken with the further end of fitting a man for some service to mankind and to truth.

27. (*c.*) *The social ideal.*—These difficulties having been thus removed, we arrive at the idea of morality as establishing a system of relations between the members of a society, by each of which relations the individuals who enter into it are directed to their respective places in the system, while the good act forms the bond of connection between them. Each person is a centre from which radiate lines of connection between him and others, and every two persons are held apart by the line which connects them. Every act creates a shifting of these relations. But just as the turn of a kaleido-

scope creates a new arrangement of the pieces of glass, which yet by mechanical contrivance obey a certain order, so these relations as they vary according to the needs of individuals are confined within the systematic order comprehended under the name of the moral law.

Good and bad acts and conduct are distinguished by their adjustment or failure of adjustment to the social order. Good conduct falls within the order: bad conduct fails to adjust itself and is condemned. The social order is therefore an order of equilibrium in which every part has its claims fully recognised. Now the moral judgment assumes that there is only one course of conduct right under given conditions (excluding the cases of complete indifference). If the conception of equilibrium is a sufficient criterion, it would follow that there must be only one position of equilibrium between the members of the order, and a little consideration shows that this is the case. For if it were possible that the conflicting impulses, sentiments, and the like, out of which the social compromise is represented as arising, could settle down indifferently into two positions, as a curve may have many maximum and many minimum points, this would show that the real strength of the parties had not been present in either position. In one case A is two degrees superior to B: in the next he is one degree inferior to B: it is impossible therefore that B should have acquiesced in the compromise which placed him two degrees below A. In any fair trial of strength between many persons, their compromises must be taken as measuring the actual forces which could have been engaged. The equilibrium of persons in society is a compromise of this kind.

28. This system of social relations, like the system of individual activities which was described in the last section, implies similarity and diversity of functions among its members. Many fight, and many work, and many govern; and there are some needs so general that

morality makes similar requirements of all, temperance and justice and the like: but each has his own individual place and holds it through preserving a right relation to those who are like and to those who are unlike himself. Morality makes the best of the endless repetition it finds in the natural beings called men, and marshals them to their place in a system of relations, the meaning of each of which is present to their consciousness. These individuals are thus not mere centres of repulsion, nor are they a mere combination of both repulsive and attractive forces, but their repulsion of each other, or that by which they preserve what is called their individuality, is identical with that attraction to each other which forms the social or moral bond. They are individual because of their morality, and moral because they are individual.

29. In illustration of a proposition advanced before, that ethics often offers the easiest evidence for metaphysical truths, I may pause to explain the notion of individuality in general indicated by this description, though of course the notion is not derived wholly from ethics, and brings into ethics associations from more abstract sources. The discussion might have been introduced equally as well in connection with the individuality of an act in the order of a good man's individual life, as in connection with the individuality of a good man in society, or of his act in so far as it is social. An individual, then, has first of all manifold attributes; and secondly, these attributes are contents or characters which are universal. Except for their universality we could never explain the connection of one thing with another. But these qualities or universals are not adventitious to or even inherent in the individual thing, but are nothing more nor less than its identity with other things which are similar in respect of this quality. The universal owes its reality to the individuals which it determines to the possession of the quality. It is like a geometrical locus which at once

determines all its points from among the infinite mass of positions in space, and is itself composed of these points. At the same time this quality, while placing the individual in a relation of likeness or inclusion to its similars, places it in a relation of unlikeness or exclusion to other things. But one quality gives very little individuality: a point on the locus is indifferent to its position on the locus till it is determined further as the point of intersection of this and other loci of positions, that is, as the meeting point of several qualities which it holds in combination. Its individual character is therefore expressed (within the limits attainable by knowledge) as the law by which its qualities are held together. I add the proviso, because the individual can never be exhausted by our knowledge. The known individual, therefore, is individual in virtue of the law of combination by which it repels and attracts both like and unlike, standing with some in more intimate relation than with others. The qualities of individuals may be regarded as simply modes in which they behave towards other things, which again by the identity and diversity of their behaviour are regarded as like or unlike them. Every object is an individual, as the focus of its own modes of behaviour; but it is so by reason of its 'universal' connection with the endless multiplicity of like and unlike things: itself is never repeated, but only its intelligible meaning connects and determines it in relation with many things, and it is held in its place by all the forces which are dragging it away to union with other things.

30. It remains to repeat in regard to morality as an order of society some remarks which were made with respect to the meaning of good as an order of the individual's activities. The preceding description has simply analysed the elements implied in the idea of a social organism, an idea which is suggested, or rather, as it is a very ancient idea, resuggested, by biological inquiries, and doubtless impressed on the general mind by the

division of labour in our greater industrial undertakings. The comparison with an animal organism (to which, *mutatis mutandis*, the description applies) is not vitiated by the different character of the organs. The member of the social organism is a man, and as such he can be conscious of the idea of the whole, though he is not necessarily always so, while the animal organ, or the animal member of a colony, certainly is not actuated by such an idea, though it may feel the unity of the whole. It is only needful in applying the analogy to state the differences created by the initial superiority.

The social organism has both its morphological or structural and its physiological or functional aspect. Under the former it is an equilibrium between the persons composing society: under the latter it is an order of conduct. Here once more, though structure and function imply each other, the order of functions is a prior conception to the structural order. The individuals who compose society exist only in the acts by which they maintain their own equilibrium. But the relation of the order of conduct to the order of structure is not the same, in the individual and in society. In the society conduct bears to structure the relation which physiological action in the body bears to the bodily structure. Moral institutions are the society with its blood circulating. With the individual the order of conduct was seen to be higher than the physiological order. In society we have, however, a similar third stage of its life, when we consider not its life within itself, but its life as an individual among other societies. Functions of its members (as, *e.g.*, its soldiers) now become in this connection conduct of the society as a whole.[1]

31. The order of conscious agents, which makes the social ideal implied by the predicate 'good,' is doubly

[1] I do not discuss the question whether there is such a thing as a collective will or collective mind of the society. The conception is a highly problematical one, and in the next section it will be seen how different society is from a mere individual.

hypothetical. It implies, first, that in the act in question every member concerned is good, a condition never true in fact, though the conduct none the less realises the ideal because it is such an act as is required by the ideal.

Secondly, the order is ideal because it is limited. It supposes society to be statical and unprogressive, an assumption which once more does not prevent the order from being realised in the good act: for the act is good in respect of the ideal at the time when it is performed. This ideal picture is the picture of a society moving through a cycle of changes which are within the cognisance of the moral judgment, a social order in mobile equilibrium marked by the rhythmical periodicity of all its functions. This condition of mobile equilibrium may not inaptly be compared to the movements of the solar system. The conduct of the individual may be represented then by the course of an individual member of this system through its orbit: the orbit resulting from the series of adjusted positions through which the planet moves while preserving its own equilibrium under all the forces which act upon it. In adapting from Mr. Spencer a favourite illustration, I am putting it to a very different use from his. The stage of mobile equilibrium is with him the ultimate goal of moral evolution: according to my analysis the conception of such a mobile equilibrium, sketched hypothetically by the moral judgment, is involved in every utterance by which we attribute goodness to an act or a person.

III.—The Individual and Society.

32. It remains to connect the two different versions which have been given of the meaning of the moral judgment according as the individual is considered by himself, or as a member of society. In the former version, an act is good which is adjusted to an order or organisa-

tion of the individual's activities: in the latter version, an act is good in which the agent is adjusted to an order of persons: the adjustment implying in both cases that every other member of the order is satisfied at the same time in the measure possible under the conditions. It is not difficult to establish the identity of principle between the two orders. But in order to do so we must first give a more explicit form to the relations which were found to subsist between individuals, and constitute what are known as moral observances or customs or institutions. That institutions have their real existence in the minds of men, even when embodied in outward form, may be assumed as obvious: though there are many persons who forget it, and raise the institutes of stone before they have provided for the animating minds. But it is not so clear that the institutions exist, when they are morally judged, in the wills of men. In the individual's own life the members of the order are activities of will, and are different therefore, as has been proved in the first part, both from the feelings, desires, and the like, on which they are based, and from the merely external acts in which they issue. It remains to show that in the social relation as well it is always the will of the parties which is affected, that the two ends of the relation as morally judged are volitional.

The truth of this is easy to recognise in cases where there is a direct rivalry or conflict of wills. Where two persons desire the same thing, and they agree to co-operate, or one retires in favour of the other, it is plain that the moral law establishes a relation between two wills, for the relation is constituted by the two acts themselves. In other cases, again, where an act issues from one person, the moral law demands a certain direct return upon the part of the other: an act of generosity claims the return of gratitude. However, the latter, supposing it to take the form of an act, is to be construed, not as an act involved in the relation of benevolence itself,

but as a new act which succeeds upon the former, and creates a fresh relation: it springs out of the feeling of relief which the person who is benefited experiences—a feeling modified by the knowledge that the relief is due to the benefactor, that is, by the reference of the relief to him as its cause. We have to examine what happens through the mere act of generosity itself, and consider both points to which that relation is attached. Let us say I give a shilling to a man in distress, who takes it. The relation between us is, in the first place, different from the merely natural events which consist in the motion of my hand and of his. Nor again is his part of the transaction merely the feeling of relief he experiences, which is simply the assurance that he now possesses wherewithal to satisfy his hunger. As such, this feeling is the basis of the act of acceptance, and this act it is which constitutes his contribution to the relation between us—a relation which is good provided I am justified in giving, and he in receiving. His acceptance is a special form of the latent will to maintain himself in life by honourable means, understanding by the expression latent will merely that he will exercise such a will whenever occasion arises. It is upon this will that his *right* to life or to be aided in the means of life reposes. Now in this case I have supposed a definite, deliberate act of acceptance; but there are cases more complicated still, in which there seems to be no exercise of will at all on the part of the patient. In these cases the relation is right or wrong in virtue of the rights which the patient may possess, even though his will is never called into play, and these rights do depend for their existence upon the volition. A man stabs another from behind, and inflicts pain on him, or even kills him. The pain arises from purely physical causes, it is an injury done to his vital energies. But just as it is not the manipulation of the knife which is condemned in the assassin, but this act as willed, so neither is his conduct condemned because he gives his

victim pain, but because the act violates his right to life. The will to support life is the response which a person makes to an attack upon himself. In the present case the act surprises this will before it can exert itself, but it is only because of the right which depends on this will that the act is deemed wrong. That it is really this will which is injured is shown by the moral indignation which arises when the will recovers itself and is free to come into play, indignation being the reaction of the offended will upon its injurer. To modify a famous saying, it is not the hurt that is condemned, but the insult. In other words, a murder is not condemned because it causes pain, but because it violates a right. It is true that that right is founded upon experience, in which the actual pain of the assault and the other disturbances which follow are involved; but the moral judgment has not in view those experiences which have created the judgment, but the rights established in consequence of these experiences.

33. Without going further into detail, it will now be plain that in all the cases the social character of which created difficulties, even in the observance or violation of self-regarding duties, as in an act of temperance, it is as between wills that the moral relation, which was shown to exist even in these extreme cases, is established. And thus we confirm for society as a whole the result obtained for the individual alone, that the medium by which morality is effected is the will: morality is a system of relations which form good conduct, relations of wills distinct in idea alike from the mere actions which represent them in the external world, and the feelings which prompt them within each man's mind. As being an order neither of mere acts, nor of mere feelings, but of conduct, such a society may be called a practical order, or having regard to that which distinguishes knowledge also from the feelings out of which it comes, an intelligible order of practice. There is no fear that such an "intelligible kingdom" should be regarded as anything transcendent or merely

logical, for it is an ideal which is realised in every good act, and the acts in which it is realised are clothed in the common flesh and blood of ordinary life.

34. We can now proceed to the conclusion required. The individual by himself was described as an order of volitions, all of which in their continuity made up his character. On the other hand, as social, he was shown to enter into relations with his fellows, which determined his place and theirs in the order of conduct. But every activity of his own is his contribution to the relations which subsist between him and others. It is one terminal point of the line which joins him to them. The balance and order that exists between his own activities, regarded as confined within himself, is therefore identical with the systematic relations that connect him with society. If he is temperate because that is required by his duty of courage, this is saying in other words that as a member of the social system of conduct, his position and functions command this proportion: for the proportion is effected by the weighing and measuring one power against another, and this is equivalent to the adjustment of the various relations in which, upon the occasions of his life, he has to stand to all other individuals. To take an instance, the desire for drink can be gratified in himself only so far as is compatible with the exercise of sympathy. Both of these are really relations to others, in the first case let us say to a man's family, in the second case to a person in distress. The acts considered as his own represent only one side of the matter: they are also observances of the claims of others. In the former view we think of the lines which connect him with others only so far as they proceed from him, in the latter we think of the points in which they end. It is plain that in adjusting his desire for drink to his sympathy he is also adjusting himself to his family or to human persons at large, and to a distressed person in particular,

and moreover adjusting these two relations to one another. The system then that prevails between a man's activities when he is considered alone, is an expression of that individual place he holds in the moral society in virtue of which he forms a centre of repellent and attractive relations. The principle therefore of the former system is the same principle as reduces society to a system. Aristotle was moved by a true sense when he gave to the rational principle which presides over the State and backs its commands by force the same name of right reason (ὀρθὸς λόγος) as he gave to the moving principle of the individual's private action. The system which exists then between all the activities of the individual is identical with the whole system of practical conduct, as it is exhibited under the conditions upon which this individual's moral life is based, or as it is focussed at the point which he occupies.

35. The moral individual is thus the reproduction in small of the social order, utilising all his powers on the plan required alike for fulfilling his own functions in that order, and for harmonising them with one another in his own life. The shape which the social order takes in him depends upon his own capacities, but the two aspects which it bears imply that not only does he simply harmonise what he possesses, but that he possesses all the powers that are required of him. An individual may, from education or otherwise, be unable to see the obligation of certain observances (a thief, for instance, the institution of property): but such insensibility to social claims is not excused. All badness springs from various gradations in insensibility to the claims of others, whether amounting to complete absence of a sense or only to its distortion. What constitutes the good individual life is therefore not a matter to be settled only within his own mind, but depends upon his social functions, and is determined by the social order.

These two conditions, that the individual must be a

harmony within himself, and that he must possess all the powers that are required of him for the purposes of society, are not different, but identical. The absence of any such power means the failure of equilibrium under the conditions to which he is exposed in society, and in like manner, since we reckon among a man's powers his susceptibilities to others, a harmony due to a general degradation of his whole nature would be impossible, because as he sinks society makes its force felt upon him more strongly. Failure of internal equilibrium is therefore sufficient to distinguish the good from the bad man. The bad man is like a diseased body which implies the unrest and disquiet of all its parts. It is true a bad man may maintain a tolerable *modus vivendi* with himself, just as a diseased body can continue to live, and the instability may doubtless be inappreciable. But there is no real equilibrium: he may by a kind of fine art seek to exclude all disturbing affections and harmonise the rest: but he is out of harmony with his conditions, and, as we have seen, functions include the conditions under which they operate. True, he may escape the policeman, and may never be detected in a wrong: but he could never really be in equilibrium unless he were perfectly bad: if he ever does a good act he is doing something which is in equilibrium with a different life from his. And as the perfectly bad man who never did a good action in his life is an impossibility (and would indeed be outside the sphere of morality altogether), we may conclude that there is as little complete equilibrium in the bad man's own nature as there is between him and society.

36. The difference in the ideals of individual good men depends upon those differences which these persons bring with them to the service of morality—differences of gifts (whether of fortune, of emotions, or of talent), and of opportunities which were described as determining difference of vocations. In all moral action, and in all good persons, we can distinguish two inseparable elements—

one, the material upon which their action is built; the other, the equilibration in virtue of which the act can be moral. The finished product combines these two elements. It will be convenient to distinguish these two elements by separate names: the element of rightness and the finished product we can call ethical; the material of morality *pathological*, borrowing a term from Kant, but without the prejudices he attaches to it. All his powers and sentiments, taken along with his opportunities, constitute the pathological individual. Besides varying from man to man, they range in any one individual through many stages of rank. Some are purely physical; some, like pity or sympathy, depend upon social relations; some, like the sense of duty, when it acts as a motive, are capacities which are developed by the growth of morality itself. The pathological individual becomes the ethical individual in so far as he works up the material of his life into a plan of conduct, and he is ethically good when his ideal represents the social order as modified to suit his special vocation. This ideal has a double aspect. In so far as he is a co-operant unit his ideal is one of devotion to society. In so far as he is independent it is an ideal of "conscious and harmonious dignity," [1] or of that self-respect which he pays to himself for the same reason that he pays respect to another, because he is good.

37. The existence of many good individuals, each with an ideal peculiar to himself, which yet reproduces the social ideal, leads to an important conclusion as to the relation of the individual and society. Good men may be said to follow a certain type: but the description is insufficient, for their type is not merely something after which they are fashioned, but something to which they themselves are contributory elements. The social type is the organic combination of individual men, as the

[1] A phrase from Mr. John Morley's essay on Carlyle (*Misc.*, vol. i.), to which also I owe the suggestion to use Kant's term 'pathological.' 'Pathological' must not, of course, be confused with 'morbid.'

body is the combination of its various organs. Hence the following result. The social ideal is a species of which all good men are the individual instances, while bad men represent ideals which fall outside the species, though they may resemble it closely. But whereas in the animal world a species consists only of an indefinite number of individuals arranged on a certain plan, and the species itself has no existence, except as a conception in the mind of the observer, or as an identical plan upon which the members are organised, in the moral world the species has a definite existence in the social order as a whole, with its institutions. The members of the moral species are not mere numbers, but together they make of the species an organism which is a real individual. Let it not be objected that since no society is in perfect equilibrium, and the ideal exists only in good men, the ideal is therefore as much a creation of the observer's mind as a natural species. An ideal implies no contrast of observer and observed: conduct is something mental: the ideal is a reality of mind, existing in the minds of those who act upon it. The social ideal has thus a concrete existence in the collective action of good men.

The phenomena of moral progress will corroborate this conception of society as a species. Strange as the result may appear, it not only accounts for the application to society of the idea of an organism, but also for the repugnance felt by some to that application. Society is felt to be more than an organism, and this feeling has been defended on the ground that in no organism are the parts conscious of the end of the whole, whereas in society they are. This consciousness of the whole, however, I need hardly repeat, is not a permanent, but only an occasional feature of morality. But the feeling that society is more than an organism has its foundation, for the social ideal is not a mere organism like an individual, but is a species in a real and concrete shape.

38. The central idea of this long inquiry into the meaning of good has been so often repeated that there is little need of more than the briefest summary. The positive results of the analysis are these. The moral judgment passed upon an act or an individual is normative: it measures its subject by a rule or standard which has been described in the two forms in which it presents itself, in the individual considered by himself, and in the society of which he is a unit. In both cases the ideal is a system or organised order, in the one case simply of the individual acts, in the other case of many individuals who participate in the system in virtue of their acts. This order is called so because, dependent as it is upon certain given needs or suggestions which are found in man, every one of them is gratified compatibly with the rest. The moral ideal is therefore an equilibrium the actual genesis of which has not been traced, but which evidently implies a compromise or balancing of one element against the other so that an adjustment is attained. The order which represents the good individual, and by which each of his acts can be judged, is identical with the order of society in the sense that it is actually determined for him by the place which he holds in the society, the two things being the result not of independent processes, but of one and the same process, the former being in fact a copy of the latter. The supposed independence of the tendencies towards individualism and universalism has been shown to disappear, for the social order depends upon the identity of the repulsive and attractive tendencies of individuals—a true independence being equivalent to true co-operation.[1]

39. Besides these positive results, there is a negative result of the analysis which is of especial importance. It has been shown that the morality of an act or an individual consists in nothing more than adjustment to the order.

[1] The same thing, we may observe, might have been indicated with regard to the individual's own activities: each of them is an independent individual act which repels or attracts the rest of the system.

There is no new quality which belongs to an act as moral over and above the character it possesses as an act. It consists in drinking a certain amount, or in giving gifts under certain conditions, and the act has no additional quality of goodness. Its goodness merely represents its adjustment to the ideal order. Hence the importance, which moralists and preachers are always ready to teach, of understanding or realising the nature of our acts: for the more we do so, the more we are able to check our inclinations by the control of other sentiments. To realise to the full that I am about to drink a glass more than is healthy is to think of my act as intemperate and immoral. We therefore need no special faculty of whatever sort to teach us morality—not even do we require a faculty of reason—our morality is an adjustment which is effected by conflict and compromise among the parts of our own nature, or what is the same thing, among ourselves and our fellows. Reason and the conscience have their special part to play in this process, but the process is one of simple conciliation which binds the good together and excludes the bad.

It is hardly less necessary to present the same negative result under another form, which does not practically add to the result. The sentiments which correspond to morality, and from which moral action proceeds, are not a new and peculiar order of sentiments, but simply the ordinary active sentiments harmonised and adjusted. Directly moral feelings, like that of duty, may largely enter into the determination of an act—that is, feelings which owe their existence to the moral institutions: just as the creation of truth may depend upon the express conceptions of scientific method. But as there are no marks to distinguish true thought from other thoughts but that of adjustment to a system of thoughts, so the feelings and ideas we call moral are but the most various feelings of human nature adjusted to one another, and refined or elevated in the process.

CHAPTER III.

OBLIGATION AND APPROBATION.

I.—Obligation.

1. (*a.*) Goodness or rightness means then that an act is adjusted to the total order of conduct. *Obligation* is but one form in which this fact of goodness appears, and it expresses that an act is the act required. It is that relation in which the single part of the order stands to the whole order, when it is confronted by the whole: whether we are considering the relations of a man's act to the whole of his own character, or of a single individual to the institutions of society. *Duty* in the abstract is the name which comprehends obligation in all its details. A duty in the concrete is any good act regarded in its relation to the whole. On the other hand, the whole has *authority* against its parts, and every particular duty is said to have authority just so far as it is backed by the whole mass of duties. The command of a sovereign has authority because it gives expression to the will of the whole society over which he presides. Every particular duty has authority in precisely the same way.

Obligation, therefore, is generically on a level with the relation between the parts of a vegetable or animal organism and the whole. It is what corresponds in human affairs to the necessity under which an organism lies of acting in a certain manner in order to conform to its type. Every duty is thus the performance of a function, and conversely every animal or plant function is,

metaphorically speaking, a duty.[1] The expression, however, is only metaphorical, for though duty and the performance of function are generically identical, the conception of duty only enters where the relation is between conscious functions. An animal is, as it were, wound up or timed to go in a certain way, and its actions obey the law which regulates its machinery. No matter by what process that law has been attained, it is there. Moral action also follows the law of the moral machinery, but the elements of the machine are agents (or the same agent at different times) who are conscious of their acts. Hence as we rise through the scale of beings the relation of part to whole changes from the mere determination of functions to the distinctively moral phenomenon of duty.

2. Obligation, as thus described, is a perfectly definite, and if the word is permitted, positive, relation which obtains between the parts of the moral ideal itself, and implies no contrast to anything outside. But in two ways negative associations have gathered round the idea. On the one hand, duty is supposed to be antagonistic to sense, and Kant's famous analysis has made this notion familiar. On the other hand, duty is regarded as the attitude taken not by the whole of good conduct to one part, but by the moral law to the bad man who is inclined to be disobedient. Even those who have discarded Kant's assumptions have still regarded a duty as an action which is to be performed by an agent who is not yet what he ought to be. Both these ideas are erroneous.

The answer to the first is plain from the whole tenor of the inquiry. The functions required by morality are not antagonistic to inclination: they accord with the inclination of the good man. Duty means the gratification of right inclinations, and moral education seeks to produce inclinations which are gratified by duty. Morality grows out of inclinations by regulating them. A duty

[1] Compare Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, c. vi. pp. 75, 76.

is not an unwilling service, but the contribution which a good man makes to the work of society. To the good man the law is an easy burden.

In giving to duty its antagonistic tone, the other notion is perhaps more potent, that obligation is a direction not to the good man, but to the bad. This notion depends upon a confusion. Duty we have seen is the relation of the part to the whole in the good organism, it is the service of a good man to his society, or to himself. When we say of an intemperate man that he ought to have been temperate, we mean only that that was the conduct required of him in his place if he was to be good: we do not imply any power in the right action as against the evil doer. Obligation is in fact different from compulsion. Only in the presence of opposing inclinations does duty wear this stern countenance. Duty, we have seen, is correlative to authority, but authority is different from the coercion which enforces it. The king's authority consists in his representing his people, not in the soldiers, or ministers, or judges, by whom he compels obedience. Coercion attends upon authority, and is part of the process by which authority is established. But though the law uses force to restrain evil, its force is different from its authority.[1] And the obligation on the good man to obey it is different from the compulsion he is under if he is inclined to disobey.

Compulsion is then the force of authority against evil doers. There is a negative side of duty to correspond to this, namely, responsibility. Connected as it is with compulsion or punishment, it will be more appropriately discussed when we are treating of the way in which morality is created and preserved. Punishment and responsibility are both of them dynamical ideas. Here we need only note that responsibility or answerableness implies the juridical notion that in case of transgression the person will be called to account.

[1] This distinction is of course as old as Butler's *Sermons*.

3. The antithesis of negative and positive is commonly used with a latitude which leaves its precise sense to be determined by the context. I have called responsibility the negative side of duty, meaning that it involves the antagonism between right or wrong which duty does not itself contain. But though duty is thus free from the idea of antagonism, it is in itself always negative, because it implies subjection. The relation of the part to the whole is that of obedience to domination, as the loyal citizen of a monarchy whose inclinations are at one with the supreme authority is subject to his sovereign. Now, morality is a spontaneous outcome of the moral nature; but in the idea of duty this spontaneity recedes before the overpowering bulk of the larger order which determines the functions of the single unit.

It is from this essential negativity of duty that it lends itself to combination with the legal idea of compulsion, and in general wears a legal garb. In consequence we shall have to see later how this legality affects the relation between duty and virtue; and secondly, on account of this negative *nuance* in duty, we shall have to ask the question, how far duty is entitled to be considered the highest of moral conceptions.

4. (*b.*) *Rights and Duties.*—The explanation of the antithesis of rights and duties follows at once from the characteristics which belong to every moral action. It is indeed specially to the domain of law that the antithesis belongs. A right is a privilege, or a claim of action or acquisition, which is secured by the community; a duty is a service which a citizen is compelled to perform, and which gives to others a claim upon him. But putting aside the machinery of force which is necessary to constitute a legal right or duty, the ideas underlying these facts separate rights and duties in morals as well. This is of course in no way remarkable, for the legal differs from the moral not by contrast but by limitation—the

legal is always based on the moral, and it is that part of morality which the law enforces, and (in so far as it is merely law) exacts from persons as external conduct, without regard to whether their action is really good or merely interested.

What then are rights and duties? An attempt has been made to identify a right with right or rightness,[1] but though any right (assuming it to be just) is right or good, the idea of a right is not the same as that of rightness, and is in fact only an element in rightness or goodness. A right is the concrete expression of rightness under one of the two aspects which rightness presents. Every moral act is both co-operative and exclusive; it binds one man to another, and one act of a man's life to the rest, but at the same time it keeps them at a distance. In its character of exclusiveness it is (in the moral sense) a right: in its character of co-operation, as being a man's contribution to the whole, it is a duty.

5. Every duty is therefore a right, and every right is a duty. This is true in two different ways. Duties and rights are correlative. Every right on my part implies a duty on the part of others to respect it; every duty on my part is a satisfaction of claims on theirs. This is the sense in which our formula is applicable to law as well as morals. In law there is an obligation on me to respect others' rights, but never to maintain my own. Now it is this other and far more important sense that the formula bears in morals in addition to the former and more obvious one. Duties and rights are not merely correlative, but are correspondent or identical. A duty does not merely imply a right, but it is itself a right. Such language is indeed not always natural to use. Thus it is my duty and it is right for me to be generous, but it would seem strange to say that I have *a* right to be generous. Nevertheless this is the case, and I should show that I had such a right, supposing ridicule were directed against

[1] Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, p. 187.

me to prevent my exercising it. And just as every duty is equally a right, so also every right is equally a duty. In times when the sympathetic sentiment is strongly (and quite sincerely) felt, it is one of the most important practical maxims, that it is a duty to insist on rights.

Apparent exceptions disappear upon consideration. Thus a good man, it will be said, is the very person who will not insist on his rights, and the special name of equity is given to the habit of waiving a claim before considerations of higher justice. And rights are thought to be antagonistic to duties. But wherever there is a conflict of a right with a duty, or of a right with equity, the conflict is not one of a right as such with a duty as such. It is so represented because the commonest cases are conflicts of legally secured rights with duties, and because in general rights have the legal associations of definiteness and rigidity. And just because of this it is of the utmost practical importance to represent the collision in this way. But the superior consideration which ought to prevail is quite as much a new right as a new duty. The conflict is of a lower with a higher right, or of a lower with a higher duty. Such collisions do and must occur: they arise from the multiplex character of the circumstances of action, some of which point to one solution, others to another. I assume, on the testimony of our ordinary moral ideas, that whenever such a conflict occurs only one of the courses, that which we call the superior consideration, is right, and the lower, though it may even be prompted by a noble motive, is, under the circumstances, wrong. But this being granted, morality makes the higher consideration a right as well as a duty. And when we waive our rights we do so not from duty, as if duty resisted right, but because there is something which may be indifferently described as a higher right or a higher duty.

II.—Approbation, Moral Sense, Conscience.

6. (*a.*) *Goodness and Approbation.*—More than once I have spoken of goodness as a fact. Yet in denying goodness to be a new quality of action I may seem to be lending colour to the belief that to call an action good is only a way of regarding it. Here then seems the place to raise a deferred question, whether moral judgments are facts or mere opinions. The question is a double one: in what sense moral judgments represent facts, and what is the connection between such judgments and mere opinions. The answers to these questions will be found to lead on to other important issues.

Let us revert to the two different meanings of a judgment as either a proposition or declaratory statement, or as a sentence pronounced upon something. Moral and aesthetical judgments, as well as those which pronounce something to be true or false, are judgments of the second kind. The moral judgment is not simply a statement of fact, but a proposition about such a fact. That I have given less than I can afford or drunk more than is good for me is a fact. That I am therefore illiberal or intemperate is a statement about this fact. But it does not cease for that reason to express a fact, as a sonnet may be written on the sonnet, and remain a sonnet still. Though goodness is not a new quality of an action, it expresses a fact about the action, in which indeed all its complex qualities are resumed. Its goodness is its adjustment to the order of action, its compatibility with the systematic whole. The moral sentence expresses this fact of adjustment. Nor is the relation any the less a fact because it is a relation to an ideal order which is never realised in its totality: the ideal is still the measure by which the act is measured.

This would seem to make the answer short and easy to the question whether goodness is matter of opinion.

Opinions may indeed differ as to what is right and wrong. Partly this is because it is in some cases uncertain what is right. But even where there is no doubt amongst good men, another may always step in and say he would do otherwise. The good man retorts, "Then you are a bad man." Such variation of opinion is nothing more than what happens in apprehending a physical fact: only a few apprehend it rightly, the rest cannot divest themselves of their personal error. Similarly an action is not right simply because I think it so: but if I am a good man my opinion represents what really is good.

7. But the bare statement that a moral judgment represents a fact, and is not a mere opinion, does justice neither to the special nature of the judgment nor to the nature of goodness, for it does not explain that goodness, besides being a fact, is a mental fact, a state of mind, not something which is true of mind, but something which exists in minds. Let us ask how goodness and the apprehension of goodness are related to one another. Now if by the apprehension of goodness we mean the deliberate passing of a judgment in so many words on an act because it is good, goodness is different from its apprehension in this sense. Otherwise we should have the absurdity that an act could not be good unless the agent himself, or some one else at hand, compared it with a standard, and pronounced upon it a moral benediction. Such reflective apprehension is no more identical with goodness than our apprehension that the crank of the wheel is adjusted to the rest of the locomotive, is identical with the adjustment itself. On the other hand, the illustration suggests the truth. Its adjustment is not something extraneous to the crank, but belongs to, is a property of the crank itself. In like manner, goodness being a relation between minds, is in the minds themselves. At the same time, though they are thus aware of the relation, they need not be aware of it as it appears to the mere spectator, and as he would represent it in a theory.

An example will make both these positions plain. A two-ounce weight falling on my head hurts more than an ounce weight. The one pain is greater than the other, and this relation between these pains exists in the feelings. The first pain is a greater intensity of feeling. On the other hand, it is not felt *as* greater unless the two pains are actually compared. To return to our subject, goodness therefore is something which exists in the minds of good men, in the good agent and those whom his act affects, and it is familiar as *approbation:* badness exists in the mind of the good man, and is known as disapprobation. It is the quality of an action (as, *e.g.*, giving such and such an amount) which *excites* approbation: its goodness, or adjustment, *is* nothing but the approbation. The fact of goodness is the approbation of the good man, and it is this approbation, this passing sentence, which the moral judgment expresses in words.

This approbation, or the reverse, is always based on the quality of the action, but it need never think of how such an action is related to the mass of duties which make up the moral order, and are symbolised under the idea of good. It does what Lord Mansfield recommended his friend to do, it pronounces judgment without assigning reasons. And it exists in different forms according as it is directed upon the action as it is actually performed, or upon the idea of it as a past or future action. When it judges a present action it is in the agent's own mind, the feeling we know as the feeling of having attained;[1] in the minds of other good men the pleasure of seeing a good act, which may find vent in an interjection of praise like bravo, or remain a silent feeling. When it is directed upon the act as it is presented only in idea, the feeling is the approbation or disapprobation we know as the working of the moral sense and conscience.

The identity between goodness and the approbation of the good man strengthens the tendency to suppose the

[1] See later, Book II., Part II., ch. v., pp. 215, 216.

moral judgment an opinion. Here again it needs only to be observed that the fact of goodness is not identical with the approbation of any one whatever, but only with the approbation of the good. He disapproves what the bad man 'approves;' his approbation is the true approbation. We may better see how the identity between real goodness and his approbation is established out of the variety of opinions as to goodness by watching the process of a compromise between a small body of men who all advocate different courses in some particular situation of their joint affairs. If we could suppose that when they agreed to vote for one common action their opinions actually changed, then their practical judgment is identical with their opinion. In point of fact the unreasonable will vote for the compromise, and yet retain their opinion that something else is advisable. The really practical, on the other hand, holding that where something has to be done by a body of men their several opinions are essential parts of the circumstances, will believe that, whatever may have been their opinion before, under the circumcumstances the compromise is wise, and will advocate it without a protesting feeling. Their opinion is now an approval of the joint agreement.

8. Goodness then is nothing but approbation—the fact and the apprehension of the fact are one and the same.[1]

[1] This identity of goodness with the apprehension of it depends on what was called above the creative property of the will, that it gave reality to an idea. With truth and beauty, if I may digress into metaphysics, the case is different. Truth is coherence between the contents of our ideas, these contents being the qualities we detect in the reality with which we come in contact by our senses. The apprehension of truth is the relation between our ideas regarded as mental events, and it is not the same as truth itself. Beauty, on the other hand, is apprehended in sensible impressions, but the beautiful thing itself is not a system of impressions, but that which is apprehended through the impressions: it is some concrete external thing, colours or marble, or sounds, or words. In truth and beauty there is in fact an antagonism between mind and reality which in goodness is transcended. Truth is mental or ideal, though it is not arbitrary, but conforms to reality. Beauty is real, though it too is mental in so far as it is not any real things whatsoever, but requires a selection among them by the mind. In spite of that it is still non-mental and external. Goodness, on the other hand, is neither merely mental or ideal, nor merely real, but is both: it is real, but

In like manner duty and the sense of duty are one and the same thing. For all this, neither goodness nor duty is anything arbitrary, as if there would be no such thing as goodness or duty unless you felt them, and the bad man could consequently not be condemned. On the contrary, it is only for the good man that fact and feeling coincide. To the bad man goodness and duty are mere theoretical facts as external as the rising of the sun or the fall of a stone; but even to him as mere external facts they are the statement of how certain persons feel and behave. They mean that a good man would act in such and such a way, or approves such and such action. And just because a bad man's feelings do not lead him to act as the good man does, does the latter pass on him condemnation.

9. It is this truth, that goodness and approbation are identical, upon which intuitionism builds, and in its treatment of this truth that it differs so widely from a true analysis. Intuitionism bases upon the identity of goodness and approbation the doctrine that goodness is some new quality of action, and a quality peculiar and inexplicable: and because approbation and the reverse are conveyed by the moral sense or the conscience, it looks to them as themselves inexplicable phenomena. Analysis accepts the fact that goodness means approbation. But in the first place it denies that goodness is a new quality of action. For an act to be good it must needs have certain qualities, must be of the kind required by the whole of the system. But given an act of this kind it is not different for being good: to call it good is only to put a mark upon it as being the kind wanted. In the next place, so far from regarding this approbation or fact of goodness as admitting no further explanation, analysis shows how it depends upon the action forming part of an equilibrated system, just as

the reality is itself mind; it is ideal, but the idea is itself real. There is here therefore no disparity between what is real and what is ideal. Hence, as we shall see later, morality or good conduct has the primacy over both truth and beauty, and comprehends them as elements in a higher whole.

the pleasure which an animal has in eating its food depends upon that act being in accordance with the rest of its nature. And proceeding further to ask why this approbation is conveyed by the moral sense or the conscience, it finds that they have this function just because they represent in each man the system of conduct, so that whatever pleases them must be in accordance with that moral order. These phenomena I may now explain at length: beginning with a general account of the moral sense which is the more generic, and dwelling with greater detail on the more interesting and important conscience.

10. (*b.*) *Moral Sense.*—Mental phenomena shade into one another by such fine degrees that it is often difficult to fix their limits. When I say, for instance, that my moral sense taught me to do such and such an action, I often mean no more than that I had a feeling which prompted me to the action. But the name moral sense is not distinctively applied till approbation or disapprobation is felt, so that we have that element of consciousness or awareness of conduct which makes the moral sense different from a motive or emotion. To follow a hint supplied by Dr. Martineau's theory of conscience,[1] the moral sense may be described as a sensitiveness to differences in conduct which are required by differences in circumstances. A

[1] There is not space to discuss at length Dr. Martineau's theory of conscience. But though, for the reason explained, no intuitionist doctrine seems to me satisfactory as an account of morality, this theory seems in two ways to make a great advance on Butler's. Instead of simply pronouncing that a motive or an act is right or wrong, conscience is said to decide between the relative worth of the motives, putting one higher and the other lower, and this relative worth is not fixed once and for all, but is settled by conscience on each occasion, so that this view of conscience is quite compatible with an evolution of moral judgments. And secondly, instead of the atomistic conception of the individual which Butler employed, we have here the recognition that the self-consciousness is not isolated, but refers to other selves. I should add, however, that in discovering the existence of other selves, and even the presence of God in all morality, by a mere examination of conscience as a psychological fact, Dr. Martineau seems to be committing in its crudest forms the error of confusion between metaphysics and psychology of which examples have been given in Book I. chap. iii.

person of fine moral sense is one who responds in his approval or disapproval to very slight intervals in the circumstances of action, as a fine musical ear can detect any slight intervals of tone, or the more sensitive parts of the skin can distinguish the two points of the compass when only slightly apart.

This sensitiveness may be further analysed thus. There is a vague mass of ideas and feelings in the good individual, which are the moral law as taking the form of idea or feeling in any one individual, and are called the moral sentiments. Suppose a certain course of conduct is suggested which my moral sense approves or disapproves. What happens is that the idea of the act comes into contact with the moral sentiments. If the proposed act is a good one, the idea of it fuses with this mass of idea, and hence arises a feeling of satisfaction. If it is bad, then it fails to adjust itself, and this resistance is the feeling of uneasiness which the properly trained mind feels at the idea of a wrong act, the resistance that is of the permanent though not necessarily articulate mass of ideas which comprises the idea of right conduct against any attempt to violate it. Very often the suggestion of action is given from within, from one of the moral ideas themselves, and it is then supported by the whole mass behind it. When a suggested bad act is actually carried into effect by the force of feeling, then we have the familiar phenomenon of the feeling of satisfaction naturally attendant on the performance of any act being embittered by a more or less intense feeling of pain. Sometimes the resistant sentiment is so vague that the agent is unaware of it till it returns upon him in the shape of remorse. It is when the mass of moral ideas is affected easily and lightly by any small deflection from right conduct, that we have the highly sensitive moral feeling—the quick action of the moral sentiments, either in the way of themselves suggesting conduct, or meeting with acceptance or rejection

a proposed action. And this operation is the immediate response of a mass of ideas without reflection, though still with consciousness. The moral sense as thus described corresponds to Kant's account of the feeling of respect for the law, and bears out his doctrine that it is not itself the creator of the law, nor simply an effect of it, but is "morality itself regarded subjectively as a source of action" (*Triebfeder*).[1] It has two characteristics: it belongs to the person himself as an individual (because the sentiments which operate in it exist as a mass of ideas in his own mind), but also it is universal because these ideas represent an order of which he himself is a contributory element.

11. In speaking of moral ideas, we may repeat, it is not to be supposed that they form a body of ideas altogether distinct in kind from the feelings which stimulate action. It is not a true account of morality to say that we have natural impulses and also ideas of right action distinct from them. When the moral sentiments exist as ideas, they are merely fainter and less detailed forms of the feelings themselves, as those feelings are organised in accordance with the moral system. Moral promptings are natural promptings which have become modified on this side and on that to suit all other requirements. Taken together they represent the practical feelings as they are formed by previous actions. As surely as every bad act leaves the feelings of its agent dislocated, and out of proportion, so do good acts, whether initiated by oneself or suggested by authority, modify the feelings in strength and in delicacy. Hence we come to a new action with a stock of ideas inherited from the past, and these constitute our moral sentiments. The moral ideas grow out of natural feelings, and are a refinement of them, and each new action by requiring a slightly different disposition of them to meet new conditions leaves them more complex, and more delicately organised

[1] *Critique of Practical Reason*, c. 3, p. 168 (Abbott's Trans.)

still. The moral ideas are therefore not a fresh addition to the natural impulses, but are those impulses as they exist under the conditions which represent the ideal of adjusted conduct.

12. (*c.*) *Conscience.*—These two characteristics of the moral sense, its personal and its social nature, may be illustrated in greater detail by the more specific conscience. The difference of the two is indeed not easy to describe: often they are employed as convertible expressions. But where conscience is more properly described as conscience than as moral sense, it seems to involve a greater reflectiveness. Like the moral sense, conscience operates through the collision of the idea of an action, proposed or performed, with the whole mass of ideas which represent the moral law in the individual. Only whereas in the former case these ideas are simply reproduced to accept or reject the proffered action which coalesces with them naturally, in conscience there seems to be a greater explicitness in the separation of the self from the idea of the action. Hence, in the first place, the intensely individual character of conscience, because it is the person's own ideas which come into prominence; and in the second place, its juridical nature, because this mass of ideas standing out against an action seems to act towards them as a tribunal.

13. Ordinary experiences which are registered in some ordinary judgments verify this statement. In saying that 'what is proposed is pleasant but my conscience disapproves it,' or 'my conscience tells me this is wrong,' we are hardly removed from the simpler moral sense. But in such ideas as are conveyed by the phrases, 'the approbation of conscience,' 'the stings or the rewards of conscience,' and still more by such sayings as 'I have a bad or an uneasy conscience,' or 'my conscience is clear,' there is an advance in the reflectiveness of the conception. In these phrases the conscience seems to proceed

from the whole of a man's personality, taking possession, by memory or anticipation, of a past or future action, and judging it.

But the characteristic mark of conscience is, that it not only proceeds from the individual, but seems to concern him alone. 'Whatever the world may say, my conscience is clear.' 'This is a matter for my conscience' or 'for my own conscience to decide.' Still more personal does the notion become when the individual conscience is set up as the criterion of action, superior even to the recognised order. 'The law may be so, but my conscience prevents me from obeying it.' That we should 'suffer for conscience sake' attests its supreme authority. And the claim of 'liberty for tender consciences' assumes that there may be directions of individual self-development of which a man himself can be the only judge. The individual appears thus to be both the source of the authority of conscience, and its object. By his conscience he acts as judge of himself. The word itself means, as John Grote has pointed out,[1] self-complicity, or knowledge of self. Its individual character may account for its absence from the Greek ethical systems at any rate in the prime. During that time there are only here and there faint adumbrations of the notion, such as for example the 'dæmonium' of Socrates himself, which is practically a kind of conscience, or private oracle of the nature of conscience. The notion of reverence (*αἰδώς*) approaches to it, but it is distinct, as respect for the order of things prescribed is distinct from the obligation to obey your best self. This reverence is fear refined by solemnity. Conscience, while not excluding fear, is in the main a sense of duty to one's own self.[2] In its extreme form of self-reflectiveness it investigates the whole of a man's character with the searching power of an

[1] Grote's *Treatise on the Moral Ideals*, p. 187.

[2] Grote has some excellent remarks on *αἰδώς* in the same chapter (Appendix to chap. ix.).

expert, in order to discover the slightest deflection from what it holds to be good. It is because of its personal or individual character that it is able to put forward a claim to independence of the state or of any social order. The claim is well founded if it means only that the good man is so self-contained as to need no reference to an outward order, or in other words, that he is in the ethical sense free, and acts spontaneously from a principle which he has within him. In our modern way of thinking we speak of a man's act as coming wholly from himself, while among many ancient peoples he was regarded as receiving a commission from God. But in times of sentimentalism, the claim has been made in the sense that every man has a right to be judged by his own judgment, irrespective of others and of the state. Such a conscience, of fine words and selfish actions, is not that which is contemplated by the moral judgment, which assigns it supreme authority. Hegel pointed out long ago (and Milton had said the same thing before him[1]) that no man had a right to a private conscience. On the contrary, the conscience sits as a tribunal on a man's acts or intentions, just because it is the representative of the moral order.

14. This brings us to the second characteristic, which we found to belong to the moral sense in general. It acts as a guide because it is trusted as the depositary of the moral law. 'Any one with a conscience would do this' implies that just because of his conscience a man's actions will be agreeable to the recognised rules of morality, and we reckon on him accordingly. And in speaking of a 'perverted conscience' morality contemplates and condemns the isolation of a man's ideas about right conduct from the judgment of his fellows. Or the body of ideas which acts as the tribunal is the reflection in idea of the order of moral relations into which the individual enters. And it is necessary to add once more that

[1] "A private conscience suits not with a public calling."

the conscience is neither author nor simple effect of this moral law, but is itself determined in the act by which the latter is determined, being but its counterpart in idea.

15. Conscience thus shares with the moral sense as a sentiment of morality the two characters of being purely personal, and yet the representative of a universal order. Where it differs from the moral sense it does so because by its greater reflectiveness it lays hold of that negative aspect of duty which is called responsibility. From the sense of responsibility itself it differs by what may be called the inwardness of the tribunal which judges: in conscience it is to myself I am responsible. Simple responsibility is therefore more objective or external than conscience. When the tribunal is regarded still more objectively as an ideal which is completed in God, the notion of conscience or responsibility makes room for a religious conception, on which is founded the idea of a day of judgment.

16. The cultivation of a refined conscience is obviously the basis of all morality: but just because of its greater reflectiveness as compared with the simpler moral sense conscience is attended by certain dangers. Attaching itself as it does to the negative side of duty rather than to the positive, it tends to associate with duty the idea of painfulness rather than of pleasure, and to contaminate devotion to goodness by fear. Again the habit of self-examination, though of vital importance, cannot be encouraged beyond a certain limit without the risk of developing a morbid subjectivity of feeling. And, moreover, though constant introspection may be in certain individuals necessary to maintain the moral vitality, it usually means something unfortunate in the individual life, some want of repose in his feelings or his circumstances, though by no means a lower degree of goodness. Those have been usually unhappy ages in history when the self-questioning spirit has been very powerful. Under the Roman Empire, for instance, when all authority was

concentrated in a single arbitrary will, the private individual, finding no outlet for his energies in the purifying exercise of free and responsible civic life, was driven back upon himself. The Stoic philosophy gained so many adherents, largely because it appealed to the unaided standard of the pure reason. But their reason, unsustained by the bracing air of practical activity, could often suggest to some of the noblest characters and highest intellects of that time no other expedient than to end their lives by more or less dignified acts of suicide.[1] The murderer in *King Richard III.* who said of conscience that "it is turned out of towns and cities for a dangerous thing, and every man that means to live well endeavours to trust to himself, and live without it," had of course his own very good reasons for his opinion. But understood in a different sense from his, his language is true, that it is at any rate happier for a man, if his moral ideas operate without the shock of collision, and deliberate self-examination is as little called into requisition as possible.

[1] Epicureanism does not illustrate the argument: but it was but the complementary effect of the same cause. Self-reflection, and the habit of settling one's destiny with reference to one's own standard of reason, is only one way out of an order of things which weakens true independence of character. The other expedient is good-humoured, or indifferent acquiescence. It is equally unsatisfying; and suicide was recommended by Epicureanism as well as by Stoicism. In Rome itself however (for various reasons: see Lecky, *European Morals*, vol. i., ch. ii.) Epicureanism never obtained so strong a hold as the rival philosophy.

BOOK II.

(*Continued*).

PART II.—THE MORAL END.

CHAPTER IV.

THE END AS GOOD CONDUCT.

I. —Conception of the End.

1. The good or the moral end is a different conception from that which forms the predicate of moral judgments of approval. In the distinction of good and bad, good is equivalent to right, and bad to wrong: but we mean something different when we speak of a man's good, of the good, or the ultimate good. Good in this latter sense is in general that which satisfies desire. According to our view of morality, however, the ultimate good is identical with good or right conduct when the latter is regarded as containing the satisfaction of desires. This is so far from being an evident proposition that it seems to conflict with palpable facts. Morality itself requires a constant sacrifice, so that good conduct need not fulfil an individual's desires: it is only to the good man that morality will be a good. And in the next place it is certain that what is right need not always be to a man's interest. The difference of right and good therefore seems ultimate. On the other hand we say, in disregard of a man's private inclinations, that his good is his real good only when it is consistent with morality. The very

object of morality is to determine under what conditions a man's good is the good, viz., when he acts rightly.

But though the good thus remains a different conception from the right, it seems to follow from our description of the latter that it contains the good. The reason is that the criterion of goodness therein stated is not external but internal. Conduct we found to be good not because it led to some further result, such as pleasure, or because it was determined by some inexplicable idea of good, but in virtue of the equilibrium it established between the various parts of conduct itself. Good conduct, settled as such by an internal test, should contain within itself the whole justification of morality without requiring us to seek outside. But this result we can only verify in detail by an examination of the various elements contained in good conduct, which shall show how good conduct stands to other conceptions of the end as an inclusive whole to its several parts.

2. Let us verify, first of all, that the system of good conduct satisfies both of two different conditions implied in the common conception of the end of morality, the first that it is the object or purpose of morality, the aim of desire; the second that it is the standard, criterion, or result by reference to which conduct is measured. These two notions are not always kept distinct, but it is under one or other or both of these aspects that the end is always described in ethical theories. The first notion, that of the object of action, is evident in the use of common language where an end means a motive or object sought; and in ethical theories the good is put forward as the actual object of desire. In ordinary hedonism pleasure is not only held to be the efficient cause of action, but the object in view, and morality appears as the means towards attaining that object. In such theories, a particular feeling or class of feelings, viz., pleasure is the end. A different position is taken when the end is declared to be not pleasure, but some mental condition, a state of attainment or

fruition in which wants are satisfied. We think of some human perfection or ideal condition of human nature to which conduct tends. Thus the satisfaction of mere bodily wants, or the possession of knowledge, or the satisfaction of the imagination by beautiful works of art, may be regarded as states of mind which morality subserves. Or human good may be regarded, as it is by Schopenhauer, as the enjoyment of identity with the one universal will. And in all these cases the states of mind so described may be the actual object of conduct.

It is an important though obvious reflection, that when the good is thus viewed under the category of object, it is not as such, or necessarily, the object of every moral action, but a theoretic statement in a comprehensive form of the objects of action. Sometimes, accordingly, as when the end is vaguely described as pleasure or happiness, the good represents only a common feature in various motives. Supposing the greatest happiness of the greatest number were really the end, it need not as such be desired in all action. We should aim at particular pleasures in particular cases, and it would only be on special occasions that we needed to think of our object in its reflective and theoretic form. Thus the good as an object must be so stated, that, while it can on occasion be the actual motive, it represents a total of various objects in which each object occupies the position that can be legitimately assigned to it.

3. Since the good as such or explicitly is not the object of every action, whenever we ask why such and such action is right, we are referred to the good itself for the reason. In justifying any particular object we are therefore led on to the second idea of the good, as the standard or criterion of conduct, the vastly more important aspect of the good. In general the same thing is both object and standard: like the objects described as perfection. On the other hand, the good may be stated so as to represent only or principally the standard

Thus we can deny pleasure to be the object of action, and yet assert that it is the ultimate good.[1] The same conception is implied when we hold that the only justification for conduct which increases vitality is that it brings a surplus of pleasure.[2] Pleasure, though it need not be the direct object of action, is its criterion.[3]

4. Now good conduct, defined, as it has so often been defined, as a system or order, satisfies both the notions illustrated. It can obviously serve as a test of what is moral; and secondly, it comprehends all the objects of right desire and will, and can itself be the single object of our action. The business of the following pages will be to show that besides being *a* test and *an* object, it is *the* ultimate test and *the* ultimate object of morality. At present a few general remarks are all that are possible.

First as regards the object. In claiming good conduct to be the object of morality, it is necessary by way of caution to guard against the supposition that the process of willing an action is itself the object of our will or desire. The object of will is not the will itself. We mean merely that the objects of the good will are settled by the same criterion as the parts of good conduct, that they are states of mind which constitute an order of equilibrium. In other words, whatever be the objects of the various moral acts, the ultimate object of morality is nothing but the combination of these objects.

This being understood, to say that good conduct is itself the object of morality is only to recall what has been already said of the object of volition,[4] that it is some state of mind which is regarded as one to be brought about by our action. No matter how much of the positive details of the action enters into the idea before the mind, that idea is still the idea of an action. Hence the object of morality

[1] *E.g.*, Mr. Sidgwick. [2] Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, p. 34.
[3] This, it should be observed, is also the view of Darwin, who regards the greatest happiness of the greatest number not as the motive but as the standard of morality (*Descent of Man*, p. 120).
[4] Cp. above, Bk. I., ch. ii., p. 36.

cannot be a passive state like pleasure or the possession of knowledge. When these are the objects of the will, what is willed is not the feeling or the state by themselves, but their production. It would be infinitely tedious to be obliged always to say so, but the condition is always implied. Hence whether pleasure is or is not always part of the object willed, the mere pleasure by itself cannot be the whole object. To will a feeling is as impossible as to will the cessation of the pulse. A mere passive state of our minds is equally impossible for an object of will. It is true we may desire a state of enjoyment without an idea of action, but we cannot will it. But the medium of morality is not desire but will, and so far as desires concern us they are directed upon the object of will.

5. Good conduct, as it is the complete statement of the object of morality, so it will be found to be the complete form of the criterion or standard. For this reason, though it is not the only criterion, it is the only *independent* criterion, all others depending finally upon it for their validity. Owing to the superior importance of the conception of the good as a standard, the greater part of the following discussion will be occupied with establishing this result. Here we may anticipate a little. If the supposed standard be pleasure or desirable consciousness, yet how can we apply the test until we know what the pleasures are which constitute the end, in other words, the sources from which they proceed? There is a further test of pleasure in the conduct by which the pleasure is produced. To a standard consisting of perfection under the form of certain ideal conditions of mind the same line of argument more obviously applies. However much these may seem to constitute an end beyond mere morality, they can only do so provided they are determined by reference to each other in the same way as the parts of good conduct. This mutual limitation is effected by good conduct itself, so that it

can only be those perfections which are produced by good conduct which enter into the standard. The order of good conduct is therefore the ultimate court of appeal.

6. Before considering in detail the various claimants to the title of the good, in order to show their exact relation to the system of good conduct, there are some further aspects of this system itself to be described. Assuming provisionally that good conduct is the end, we can explain from its general characteristics certain conceptions which are further involved in the notion of the good—those, *e.g.*, of common good, and self-sacrifice. We must then test this assumption by further examining the component parts of the system of good conduct, in order to show the exact position occupied in the good by the elements of pleasure, vitality, or perfection, which have been used as illustrations in the preceding paragraphs, without any inquiry into their exact value.

II.—Common Good.

7. How can the good be a *common good?* What is implied in the latter idea? That morality is a common good is a part of the ordinary moral consciousness, and it is acknowledged and freely assumed by all ethical theories, at any rate by all those which interest us to-day. If we take the physical view of morals, it is fundamental to this view that there can be nothing good which does not contribute to social vitality: if we take idealism, idealism stands or falls with the conception.[1] On what ground, then, do we call morality a common good?

It is not enough by way of explanation to point to that sympathy of persons with one another which undoubtedly is at the basis of all morality. The answer would be

[1] The idea of a common good finds its most striking expression in Green's *Prolegomena.*

appropriate if we were asking how a common good can come into existence; we should be tracing its growth from simpler conditions. But when we are inquiring what common good is, the same remark applies to sympathy as applies to conscience—the community of good exists only in the sympathy of good persons for one another, but that sympathy has a complex character which itself admits of explanation, and to explain it is to assign the meaning of the common good. What we can do in this connection is to indicate the difference between sympathy in the form of moral sentiment and the lower forms of sympathy, such as we find in animals, where a pleasure or pain is excited by the mere sight of pleasure or pain on the part of other creatures, a sympathy which doubtless has its basis deeper down in the physical tie of blood or common race. It is a long step from this lower kind of sympathy to the highest, in which I can hold another person's joys or sorrows before my mind and identify myself with them. Descriptive psychology would fill up the interval, and might trace in the human mind itself the gradations from the lower to the highest form. Thus the irresistible temptation to an untrained man in the rear rank when the word is given to charge bayonets, is an instance of a rudimentary sympathy depending on imitation, such as we find commonly in gregarious animals: the action of the front rank in bringing their weapons down spreads amongst the rest like an infectious disease.[1] When a multitude of people are carried away with enthusiasm by an idea suggested to them by an orator, we have a stage of sympathy higher than this simple kind, but not yet the conscious sympathy of morality. But when we have arrived at the highest stage, we could only describe it properly by knowing already what the common good is.

8. The latter question is like that which arises in

[1] Cp. some valuable remarks of Prof. Steinthal on this kind of imitation, *Allgemeine Ethik*, pp. 329 foll.

considering the relation of particulars to the general idea which is said to be common to them. Early philosophy represented this relation very naturally as one of participation, and the connection of any good action with the good itself was accounted for in the same way. In the previous discussion I have used the illustration of the figure of a locus which connects together all its points and is itself constituted by them: the idea common to several particulars we found to be the identity of their content or quality, which identity at the same time requires them to occupy different positions. From the application which was made of this conception to describe the relation between the individual member of society and the whole moral order, we can see in what sense that moral order is a common good.

In the first place, the common good is not to be regarded simply as something in which all participate; it is not something which might, as it were, be cut up into portions and distributed. Such a conception would be open to the objection, brought long ago by Aristotle against the Platonic theory of ideas, that there would be no reason assigned for the distribution, and the salient fact of conduct would remain unexplained, that each person has a different work to perform. We have seen that the moral order is a system of relations between persons, which are relations of will. The good act is one which enters into this system, in adjustment to it. This system, as such, preserves the individuality of each, and thereby makes him contribute to the total good. What constitutes the individual's good is therefore, *ipso facto*, an element of the general welfare, and it is a common good, because it binds him with others in the moral system. The good act links him on to others, fulfilling their claims at the same time as it satisfies his needs, and it concerns all, because every such act creates a rearrangement of those relations which shift within the limits of the system. In exactly the same sense it might be said that the bad act is a common evil.

because it means a failure of adjustment right through the system. The immediate effect of an action is felt, of course, over a very slight area, but it is none the less permanent and universal, though the waves of disturbance become fainter and fainter, as they move outwards from their centre. It is thus that the real sanction of a moral act is held to be its intrinsic good or evil for society.

9. Every good act, every part of the moral order, is thus a common good in virtue of the tie it creates between all the members of the order. So far as these persons are moral it satisfies their wants in respect of the particular occasion in question. And this community implies the definite and different functions of each. This double aspect of the good is so important that at the risk of repetition I will emphasise it once more, though in a different form. In the first place, then, the system of relations which make up the moral order has its existence in the separate wills of different individuals. The moral relations are not independent of these wills, but represent their attitude to one another. In other words, morality is always personal. But in the second place, the moral act breaks down the isolation of persons and puts them in communication with one another, always through this medium of conduct. In losing something, in satisfying his wants only in the definite way discovered by morality, the individual at once recovers himself and is acceptable to others.

10. Good conduct behaves, therefore, like language. The spoken language differs with every person who speaks it in pitch, in intonation, in the special associations which it has for him, in the peculiar turns of phrase which represent his character. But the words have a meaning which this complex of sound conveys to the mind of another who understands. The language has no existence but in the persons who use it: even when it appears to acquire a quasi-independent existence in a book,

it can only be understood by each person converting the suggestions on the printed page into his own words, into the special form in which he can appreciate them. But in virtue of its meaning it is a medium of communication. The advantage of a book is that it presents language without the accidents of special speech, in what may be called an objective character, though Plato has reminded us of a corresponding disadvantage, that you cannot talk with the book. Conversely, if a person is to communicate his thoughts, his speech can be permitted to vary only within certain limits. If he is indistinct, or inarticulate, or mispronounces, or uses words in associations which are intelligible only to himself (like catch-words, which may be meaningless to persons ignorant of the circumstances to which the words refer), then he fails to adjust himself to others; he does not speak their language, his words have not the true ring.

Now morality is a common good in something of the same way; it is a medium of communication, a language in which will speaks to will. Its communicableness is that which makes it a common good. To keep up the illustration, the good man is intelligible to the good: the bad man is unintelligible, not in the sense that we cannot comprehend his motives, but because he speaks falsely, or in a strange dialect. He does not communicate with the good, nor indeed always with the bad, for the perversions of language are infinite, and the varieties of evil are a confusion of tongues.

11. Another characteristic of morality, that it is *objective* or objectively valid, is so intimately related to the notion just analysed, that I will allude to it here. Let us first remove certain misconceptions. Good conduct is not objective or universal because it is what every good man must do. Such a proposition would be either a truism or false. It is false if it means that there is any conduct which is binding equally on every man: morality, we have seen, is always individual. On the other hand,

if it means that every man in the same position must do likewise, it is true, but its apparent universality is a mere show: every man in the same position is nothing more than this individual man.

Secondly, morality is not objective, as if it were something outside the minds of men. True, an act good or bad alike has an objective reality as a natural event, but in this view we do not appeal to moral considerations. On the contrary, morality exists only in men's minds, and in such a way that only the good act is objective, while the bad act is subjective. Where then does the objectivity of morality lie? In the same feature which makes it a common good. Its objectivity implies a kind of compromise with other minds, so that what is objectively right is something in which all the minds called good find their satisfaction, each laying aside its merely personal whims, and giving up something for a common agreement. How the compromise is effected is a question of moral dynamics: certain it is that morality involves such a compromise. The good act is therefore objective because, being of the mind, it conforms to that order which links together all minds. The bad act is subjective, though it too is of the mind, because it isolates the agent, severs him from connection with others; it is an act of will, but wilful and capricious, and according to our simile unintelligible, like a solecism.

We cannot raise the question with regard to right without suggesting a similar solution for knowledge as well. Objective truth, too, seems to be something which, not existing outside intelligences, implies a compromise amongst them. For the possession of knowledge each one must depend upon his own ideas: but these ideas are either mere fancies, or they are real knowledge. They are fancies when they are merely personal, and they may harden into prejudices or perversions. They are truths when they are the words of a language in which intelligences can speak to one another.

III.—Egoism and Altruism.

12. The conception of a common good suggests by contrast two further problems as to the nature of the end. A common good implies that I identify my good with something which includes the good of others. How then, since at first sight there seems to be a discrepancy between the two, do I make the good of others my object, going beyond myself in the range of my interest? The second problem arises from an essential factor of the common good, in which the contrast of the unit and the whole is most sharply expressed, the fact of self-sacrifice.

The former question is that of the position of altruism in the end: it was practically solved by the conception of the moral person yielded by our analysis of good and bad, according to which the good of self and that of others were mutually involved. Morality is the answer to the problem of reconciling the manifold likes and dislikes of many persons; and the solution set up such a standard of separate individuality as was not only not antagonistic to others, but implied their satisfaction. Self-love and love of others describe the moral relation from opposite ends. If by self we mean the mass of activities which make up a man's moral life, every act of respect for others is an act of self-furtherance. Self-furtherance turns to selfishness when the gratification is incompatible with the moral development of others.

13. In what light, then, shall we consider the ancient conflict of self-love and love of others? No one now maintains that the good of others is only a means to the good of yourself. Are we, then, granting that they are parallel objects of pursuit, to reconcile them, either by showing, like Butler and his modern disciples, that they coincide on the whole, or by finding some metaphysical community between different persons: or shall we content ourselves with simply recognising a distinction between

two kinds of conduct, egoistic and altruistic, modes of action tending to mine or others' good? The answer is not doubtful: it consists in showing how in both kinds of conduct alike I identify myself with others.

We are entitled to assume as not needing proof that the instincts of altruism are as fundamental and original as those of self-love. Under the latter fall all sorts of impulses which have a more personal reference; under the former those which are conveyed to us through sympathy with the needs of others. The good of others or of myself, which is suggested by these impulses, is therefore equally an object, in the common use of the term, of will or of desire. If we use stricter reasoning we can see how in either case we identify ourselves with others. What we will is a course of conduct which is either egoistic or altruistic, according to the source which suggested it. But in either case it involves a satisfaction both of myself and others, the former being the prominent element of egoistic, the latter of altruistic conduct. In willing another's good I will a course of conduct in which consists his good if he accepts it. So far I identify myself with him. A similar result holds of desire. In desiring the good of another I contemplate his satisfaction, but unless it had some relation to myself I could not make it the object of desire. Altruism is thus merely conduct of which the egoistic character recedes into the background.

14. But while I can thus will another's good, it is important to see that the parts we play are different. I do not will *his* good as *my* good. His good is something which he must attain for himself by the exercise of his own powers; and in this exercise and this satisfaction I have no share. My good and his good we each enjoy in our own person. It may be contended that the distinction is unreal: that there is no more difficulty in willing the good of another on the ground that it cannot be enjoyed by me than in my willing my own good, which while

it is still in idea is also not enjoyed by me. But I am not resting the case upon the difference between an idea and its realisation, but distinguishing between what ideas can and what cannot enter into the object of volition. We may without impropriety speak of willing another's good: but we use the phrase to express the fact that in willing certain events upon which his good ensues, we qualify one of our ideas, say the idea of putting a guinea in his hand, by the more or less general idea of his satisfaction, which we represent to ourselves by analogy with our own experiences. This does not, however, entitle us to say we will his good as our good, for the term good has a different meaning in the two cases, and we do not will his good in the same sense as we will our own.[1] To return to our assertion, then, in a benevolent action, for instance, the rôles of the two actors are entirely different: I will the performance of kindly conduct—conduct, that is, which according to the moral system is equivalent to his good: his share in the relation is a conduct of his own. If we may use such language for a moment, a kindly action realises both myself and another, but it realises in each case a different self.[2] If his end could be directly mine, all the articulation of the moral order would be gone. It is the more necessary to insist on this because the conception of a common good is apt to suggest an absolute identity of good. Mysticism is a rock not far removed from all speculation and theories, like that of Schopenhauer,[3] and in greater or less degree all forms of so-called Monism, which hold that in the good act the individual is at one

[1] To use the technical language invented by Clifford, my good is a subjective idea, his good an ejective or inferential idea. We can only will a subjective idea. I shall return to the subject later (ch. v., p. 223).

[2] This is indicated by T. H. Green. It seems to be implied in the following passage:—"They are interested in each other *as persons* in so far as each, being aware that another presents his own self-satisfaction to himself as an object, finds satisfaction for himself in procuring or witnessing the self-satisfaction of the other" (*Proleg.*, p. 200).

[3] See Schopenhauer's *Grundlage der Moral*, § 16, p. 211.

with others, and with the Universal Being, are victims of the misconception. A true theory will always be so far individualistic that in accounting for how one man can pursue the good of another, it will insist that the good attained by each party to the transaction is different and incommunicable.

15. Accordingly in all altruism, while aiming at the good of others, we aim also at our own, though the former is the more prominent. In like manner, in all right egoism we aim at the good of others. 'Egoism' and 'altruism' are ill-sounding words, but they have the advantage of speaking of morality in terms of conduct rather than of motive, according to the prominent character of the two kinds of behaviour. And they are free from a danger which attaches to the conceptions of self-love and benevolence as a description of the contents of morality, a danger which has caused much of the difficulty felt in reconciling the two ideas. Self-love and love of others represent very properly the more self-regarding and the more impersonal impulses. When they are used to describe the principle of conduct, this usage depends on the two simple complementary elements of all good conduct, its exclusiveness and its solidarity—its furtherance of self, which is one with the furtherance of others. Divergent ethical systems adopt the principle of self-love or benevolence according as they think of one or the other aspect of morality. So understood these ideas are comprehensive notions, arrived at by the reflection of an observer of morality as a whole: they are primarily theoretical ideas. But love of self and love of others inevitably suggest that not merely do they describe my act, but that the advantage of myself and others is before my mind in explicit form. I will my act as my advantage, or in the contrary case, as their advantage. If we suppose this is always the case, we are transferring a reflective idea from the mind of the observer into the consciousness of the agent he observes. Certainly the ideas of advantage are

present on occasions when personal advantage has to be balanced against that of others. But in ordinary experience we rarely think of an act as our advantage, but adopt it on its own merits, and because we feel it to be what we want. More often we think of the good of others as such, but in general the moral agent throws his energies into certain actions, because they are what they are, without further reflectiveness. And if we would not confuse an ethical reflection with a psychological fact, we must use the same caution when we represent our objects by the conception of good. We do not seek our ends necessarily as *good*, but they are suggested by our wants, and we pursue them. The terms 'egoism' and 'altruism' need imply no theory, and they are therefore not subject to this confusion, which will meet us again in the question of self-sacrifice.

IV.—Self-Sacrifice.

16. The very idea of a moral order rests upon compromise. In entering into right relations with others certain things are given up, certain claims are waived, in order to satisfy other claims. Human beings are plastic shapes which are moulded to the needs of good life. Self-sacrifice is thus an essential factor in good conduct. And we can see what it is that is sacrificed, and how it is sacrificed. Every act appeals to a character which contains many parts, some of which are gratified, but others are not. It is the surrender of these latter qualifications which constitutes the sacrifice. There is therefore in most, perhaps in all moral action, an abandonment of happiness. Moreover, the very simplest actions stand on the same footing as the most exalted self-devotion: whether you give up half your meal to feed another, or resign a cherished pursuit for the better service of mankind, in either case it is the happiness which would have come

from the balked impulses which is sacrificed. I say happiness, and not good (in the sense of good conduct), for the sacrifice of a duty would not be regarded as moral, and wherever we seem to sacrifice a duty and are yet approved (as in some famous cases of conflict) the lower conduct ceases to be a duty in comparison with the higher.

17. The answer will come: granted that happiness is sacrificed, this is only momentary, not permanent, happiness. A man may not attain his good or the satisfaction of his desires by doing what is right, but in the end he attains his real happiness or his real good. However much appearances are to the contrary, his abandonment of happiness is for his real happiness. Now if we declare real happiness or real good, for we need not distinguish them here, to be such happiness as comes from doing rightly, then of course *cadit quaestio*, the question loses its value. But real happiness may mean two different things: it may be taken objectively as the ideal happiness after which we ought to seek, or it may mean a happiness which the particular individual will find greater than he could obtain by any other course. We have to ask, then, whether the moral good is always for the happiness, or to the interest of the individual. Now there are two things which may be asserted at once in reference to this question. It is evident that morality and happiness coincide upon the whole and in general. Unless this were so, morality would be a senseless thing. Whatever the weight we allow to happiness in the end, morality is founded, as we have seen, on the wants, the likes and dislikes of persons, and solves the problem so presented. It would be self-contradictory if it only made people on the whole uncomfortable, and it could not last for a day. And in the second place, to the really good man, finding as he does his happiness only in that which his character demands, the question of whether morality secures his real happiness is unmeaning. This being premised, we must admit that in many cases where we

contemplate the possibility of transgression no definite answer can be given. Mr. Stephen's remarks on this subject are so apposite that I will venture to quote them. "A lapse from a high standard may embitter the whole life of an honourable man. It may embitter it so keenly as to make such a life worse than death: and in that case, a choice of death would be a choice of happiness. But the opposite hypothesis is certainly conceivable. I see nothing contrary to the recognised laws of human nature in supposing that Regulus might commit himself to martyrdom in a moment of enthusiasm, and be afterwards overcome by a weakness,[1] which would double the pangs of death: whilst on the other hand, had he given way he might have made the discovery—not a very rare one—that remorse is amongst the passions most easily lived down."[2]

There are thus some persons so constituted that goodness would be to them a real loss of happiness. They are the extreme cases which prove the reality of self-sacrifice even in the commonest acts of good men: for whereas sacrifice is not felt by the good man as a loss, it would be so felt by these men if they were forced into right action. Nor can it be denied that in the general sense of interest there are persons who may succeed in all their desires more effectually by selfishness, if only they are careful not to transgress too far, and still more if they can put on the appearance of goodness. No doubt can therefore be entertained that self-sacrifice is a real fact. But the discrepancy between goodness and interest thus established does not so much concern the nature of the end as it concerns the circumstances under which the dynamical growth of any moral end takes place.

18. According to the view taken here, self-sacrifice means simply the abandonment of a good which we

[1] In which case, we observe, he would not be a perfectly good character.
[2] L. Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, p. 428.

should naturally seize under other circumstances, and it is a real and definite loss. It may be useful to illustrate this view by considering the attempts that have been made to deny its reality, the one on the ground that the sacrifice is really the pleasanter to the agent, the other on the ground that he is compensated for his loss. Let us take the former contention first. The possibility of self-sacrifice is sometimes supposed to be intimately connected with the doctrine that our acts are determined by personal pleasure, so that if that doctrine is true, self-sacrifice is an illusion. In reality self-sacrifice is possible, even though pleasure is always held to be our object. This is true in both the different ways in which that doctrine is held. The agent prefers at the moment the act of self-sacrifice, and finds it pleasant, but then the loss of happiness involved in his choice is only one incident in a total good which contains many other elements. On the other hand, supposing that action is always determined by a forecast of the pleasure to be got by it, then (irrespective of whether this is a fact or not) self-sacrifice is still a reality. For even if the whole act is thought of as pleasant (and I cannot doubt that the martyr might possibly think of the future pleasure of an approving conscience as outweighing all the horrors of the fire), yet part of the picture is that of happiness foregone. To suppose that self-sacrifice is impossible because the act is pleasant, is to repeat with regard to self-sacrifice the error of reflectiveness which met us in dealing with self-love. It is to suppose that because self-sacrifice means an abandonment of happiness, or a disadvantage, it is impossible unless we can aim at our own disadvantage. Only the belief that self-sacrifice must mean a choice of pain as pain could make that idea seem contradictory. No man seeks after pain, and even those who hug their misery, like those who delight in having a grievance, do not care for these things for their own sake, but for the satisfaction of occupying their minds with them. If self-sacrifice

meant the pursuit of pain, it could only be regarded as the eccentricity of a person who took delight in what to others is painful. But it means no such thing. And if we may put aside all theories of pleasure, then arguing to the highest devotion from the ordinary sacrifices of daily life, we find in the moralised mind the idea of something to be done which is adopted, even though it means exclusion from much happiness. The agent considers the act for itself along with its good and evil, and adopts it with all its incidents.

19. In the idea of compensation we find the same result illustrated in an instructive way. The idea conveys a truth, but it may be employed so as to convey an untruth. Do we mean that the act of self-sacrifice itself compensates for the loss which is suffered? We are then describing the truth that to the good man his sacrifice is worth more than the ignoble pursuit of lower aims. We are representing his preference of a higher in contrast to a lower life. On the other hand, we may imply that despite his sacrifice he has an ulterior aim, a compensatory good different from the action itself. Seeming to live, or to die for others, he is seeking after a highly ideal but still personal aim. So understood, the idea of compensation is false. It is probable, as a matter of fact, that the greatest acts of heroism have been acts of complete absorption in the end which is sought, the personal good of the agent passing out of sight. Great actions which lack this impersonality, though they may be of the greatest beneficence, we do not regard as acts of self-sacrifice. In other words, the good of the agent does not lie beyond the action, but is the very conduct he pursues in his effort to benefit others: the martyr gains his highest end, but it is in devoting himself to death: his best self lies in this act itself.

Self-sacrifice, therefore—such is the result we have verified—is altruism regarded in relation to the advantages foregone in the act. As such it is the duty required

of the agent by the moral order—equally a duty whether it is imposed upon an ordinary individual in the course of trivial daily experiences, or falls to those persons of exceptional gifts or exceptional position with whom self-sacrifice rises to the pitch of heroism. It is essentially one factor in the existence of good conduct in general, but it seems to be something abnormal and incomprehensible, because it is only when the satisfaction surrendered is great in amount that self-sacrifice excites attention.

V.—The Supremacy of Conduct.

20. The good is a common good. The good involves self-sacrifice. These are relations between the parts of the good—between the individuals who co-operate in obtaining it. We have yet to see what the elements are which are combined in the conception of good. As a preliminary, let us first review what the actual contents of this moral ideal are. They are the duties which are organised under the name of morality, and if our former results are true, they cover the whole of life. They include prudential conduct as well as the duties prescribed by the recognised virtues; and, moreover, they include all those relations, varying indefinitely with different persons, which arise from their practical interest as members of an army, a church, a corporation, a club, a civil society, whatever institutions they are called upon to maintain. The ordinary cardinal virtues occupy so large a space in our life that it is not unnatural if morality is sometimes believed to concern only a certain portion of our conduct, to formulate only the fundamental laws of society, leaving the rest to the individuals themselves. But the particular ordinances of a sect or a party are none the less binding on the members of these institutions because their interests are limited. We cannot draw a line between those

needs to which correspond certain well marked and simple moral sentiments, and those to which correspond sentiments too special to have acquired a name. The minutest particulars and trivialities of life have their duties though their virtues may be nameless. These, however, all concern practical interests. Besides these, good conduct includes the activities of art and science, the position of which in the end is of the highest importance for establishing the supremacy of conduct.

21. These activities enter into morality in virtue of the will which is bent on discussing truth or producing art. What is right or wrong is the volition of the artist or inquirer: the inquirer's virtue is the virtue of right thinking. How completely virtue of will is bound up with art and science is a matter of experience, and though we have no name for the virtue of right thinking[1] in distinction from the excellence of true thinking, we recognise it under various special aspects which it bears. Art and science require industry, persistence, decision, devotion, courage, both in the form of resistance to temptation, and more especially in the more physical form of that kind of pluck which faces difficulties without losing hope. And more than these, they require at every step in the process singleness of will, the honesty to dismiss prejudice or any aim incompatible with truth or art for their own sakes, and the sustained determination to see into things according to the best of our insight, guided by the best helps available. The very process of sustained attention, without which productive work of any kind is impossible, is an act of will, and different as are the subsidiary powers which are utilised by the will in the two cases, the industry of the carpenter and the industry of the philosopher are identical in kind. This complete interconnection of the purely intellectual or imaginative process with the volition makes it necessary that defects in the

[1] Of course I exclude the phrase 'a right thinking person,' which means a person possessed of moral sentiments.

will, which show themselves in so-called moral weakness, should leave their mark on the character of the scientific or artistic work. Weakness of will impairs clearness of insight, not because insight itself is a matter of will, but because an effort of will is needed to keep a faculty at its highest strain.

22. Hence what is ordinarily called goodness, viz., the practical dealings of mankind with one another, forms only one portion of the ideal of morality. The broad and well recognised virtues of chastity, temperance, courage, wisdom, are only the foundations of good conduct in certain departments. Being the most salient parts of life, and moreover those in which temptations are most frequent, they have monopolised the name of virtue, just as the old word purity is in process of being restricted to the one virtue on which most obviously the social fabric is built. But the ideal of goodness includes the conduct which wills other ends than the obviously social relations, first health, and then art and science. The care of health is dismissed as the object of prudence, art and science are supposed to be intellectual or imaginative excellences. In reality they all enter into the content of the end. Accordingly, if we affirm that truth, goodness, beauty, are the end of life, we must remember that we are not speaking of goodness as a whole, but only of that part of it which is concerned with specially practical as distinguished from productive conduct.

23. It is more important to observe that art and science, though they occupy a special and limited place in the end, stand upon the same footing as the rest of conduct. We have only to revert to the conditions on which conduct is based—the various affections of human nature, the physical functions, the feelings, egoistic or altruistic, imagination, thought. Some of these, like the sentiment of duty itself, could not exist except for morality itself. Upon the impulses arising out of them all conduct is built; but these impulses, though they are very unequally

distributed, stand on the same level. They all arise in the individual according to what he is and to his circumstances: they are not yet conduct: they belong to what I have called the pathological as distinguished from the ethical man. Though the impulse to investigate a body of facts or to make a statue is rarer and more elevated than the desire for exercise or pity for distress, they all stand on the same level in relation to morality. Thinking and drinking are alike in its eyes. The conduct of the artist is only the special conduct required in a person of special and not widely diffused gifts.

24. Hence we can understand how lives of devotion to other than obviously social functions, lives different from the ordinary citizen's, can be morally judged. We have to concede to the special duties which such a one owes to the cultivation of his special gifts the same claim to being moral as to his other functions. Persons of different capacities and different positions have by the very nature of the moral order a different ideal, a different specialisation of the common system. The lives of some great thinkers and artists have been a puzzle to the moral consciousness, which reprobates their excesses, though it acknowledges their achievements. Sometimes it allows their greatness, but denies their goodness. In the view here taken their goodness must be measured not merely by the measure with which they attain the ordinary standard, but by their devotion to their special duties as well, and we must judge them as a whole. We may, indeed, endeavour to palliate their lives by minimising the importance due to the commoner virtues in these exceptional characters, by dwelling on the temptations to which their passionate natures are exposed. This may explain their actions: whether it excuses them is a matter for the moral judgment, and the question seems to be decided in the negative. There is no reason to suppose that these special gifts confer a dispensation, and do not rather impose a higher responsibility. To palliate their sins

is really to dishonour the persons we defend. But in dealing with such cases we are often the most partial and pharisaical of judges. We know from our experience that most good men are only good on the whole. But men of genius we estimate by a rigid standard, and are struck with horror because we sometimes find them failing. It is right that a defect in a more highly endowed nature should appear greater by contrast. But why conclude that such men are worse than others? Their publicity brings upon them a scrutiny under which few lives would be found faultless. But granting that they are no more saints than the average of good men, we have to reckon their failings in one direction against their loyalty in others, and we can then ask whether in the life of any ordinary man, without their special gifts or special temptations, the proportion of goodness to evil is greater?

25. The supremacy of morality, in this view, lies in this, that morality is not subordinate to a good consisting in the attainment of certain ideal states, but comprehends them. Knowledge and beauty might well seem ends which the will to attain them subserves, but which rank higher than the mere process of attainment; and the same might be thought of those states attained by ordinary good conduct. But just as it is by the test of good conduct itself that we determine which of our practical satisfactions are a legitimate portion of the end, so truth and beauty belong to the end of life only when they are limited and defined according to the ideal of conduct. There are cases where a man must leave a gift uncultivated at the call of other claims, or where he can only pursue his tastes up to a certain point. Unless we are to hold the monstrous doctrine that such a person really fails to attain his end, and that there is some other end different from the end which we approve, his end, we must hold, is settled as consisting of those states which come in the way of right conduct. It is not the cultivation

of his talent which is the end of his life, but such cultivation as he wills, if he wills it in the manner prescribed by morality. Good conduct itself, as involving the equilibrium of his powers, itself supplies the test by which his satisfactions are to be judged worthy.

In this way, morality is the supreme concern of life, not merely the process of attaining some higher condition. All goods run up into good practice—everything is grist to that mill. The end of all life is good character. But the conceptions of practice and character we enlarge so as to include more than those activities, which have usurped the names. Art and science are practice equally with benevolence. And in character we reckon not merely that which issues in beneficence or courage, but that which is bent on intellectual or imaginative results. All the powers of human nature find thus their ultimate significance in the use to which they are put in conduct or character, the highest expression of human life.

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CHAPTER V.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE END.

I.—Perfection and Merit.

1. (*a.*) Perfection conveys different ideas which may be classed together under two heads. Either it is a positive or absolute conception implying the highest possible standard, or it implies a comparison with what by contrast is imperfect, and this contrast of high and low, perfect and imperfect, has been already introduced. The position of this conception among the elements of the good we have now to discuss. Let us first see, however, that perfection of itself is not sufficient to determine the end, and in considering the question we may put aside whatever difficulties arise from regarding perfection as a perfect state rather than a perfect activity. Obviously, we have only to deal with the absolute notion of perfection, and the argument will be similar to that employed in the last section. Perfect, then, is that which is the best possible: perfection is equivalent to the best possible conduct. Can we accept this as the law of the end? Only when the best possible conduct is understood as the best which is possible under circumstances determined by morality itself. Otherwise understood the conception of perfection is either unmeaning or false. It is unmeaning supposing it implies a similar standard of perfection for all: for even if the highest perfection, say of an emotion or a talent, could be known, it would be unattainable for men of lower powers. It is positively false and contra-

dictory to morality in those cases already mentioned, where the fullest cultivation of a scientific gift would conflict with other claims; and those cases are only extreme instances of the universal law that every power is to be regulated in its exercise by all the rest. Duty does indeed demand the fullest development, but there is no point in the scale which is fixed as the limit. The fullest development is exercise up to that point which is determined by morality, and that point need not always be the absolutely highest possible. On the thermometer of morality the point of perfection varies with each case. It is therefore not perfection which determines morality, but it is that criterion by which goodness and badness are distinguished which determines what is perfection.

The same result follows if we construe the standard of perfection as equivalent to following the law of one's nature. Without further definition, this precept would encourage the weak man in his weakness, and the bad man in his vice. This law of nature which we set up as a standard is in reality not a given standard of measurement, but is itself discovered in experience. I shall afterwards describe the process by which it is discovered: but the result of the process is what we know as morality, with its distinction of good and evil. In general the law of an organism's nature is that arrangement of its powers which enables it to work without friction: now in human affairs this arrangement is the order of good conduct. Accordingly the law of human nature, whether in general or in a particular individual, is itself determined by the criterion of right and wrong.

It may be added that the conception of self-realisation, which is closely akin to that of perfection, is open to the same criticism, that it is a subordinate principle of conduct. Every exercise of power realises the self: we want to do certain things, we can do them and we do them. But what self it is which is to be realised is not given in the conception itself, but is decided once more

by that criterion of right and wrong which makes morality the supreme principle of life.

2. But the end demands from every one the highest efficiency. In subordinating perfection to rightness, it may seem that we fail to satisfy this requirement. If rightness or goodness means an equilibrium of powers, this equilibrium may be attained if all a man's powers are equally sluggish. Is not the idea of perfection necessary to raise the level? A little reflection shows that this doubt depends on a misconception of the criterion of rightness. The equilibrium it requires is not between the powers of the individual by himself, according to his own fancy of his powers, but between those powers as they are called into play by the whole society in which he lives. It is a miniature of the social equilibrium. Now the cultivation of his faculties beyond the point at which in his indolence a man may estimate them is demanded by the moral order itself, which has discovered such cultivation by each to be the *sine quâ non* of social equilibrium among all.

The objection is baseless, but it serves to introduce a new consideration. To aim at perfection is in a certain sense a real principle of conduct. The dying advice of a Sussex farmer to his son, "Mind and always keep better company than yourself," sums up all practical wisdom. But it is a rule of practical wisdom, it is not a principle of philosophy which describes the character of the end. It is a rule of self-education which indicates how you are to prepare yourself for fulfilling the end. If you imitate a low ideal, you remain upon a low level; in following the pattern of the best you are learning the range of your own faculties at the same time that you are moulding them on the lines of morality. "We shall do well," said Law, the author of the *Serious Call*, to John Wesley, "to aim at the highest degrees of perfection if we may thereby attain to mediocrity."[1] Most people are

[1] Southey's *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 57 (2nd edition).

unaware how much they can do, and some even refuse to try, because they make up their minds that they have not the power. The example of the highest lives, in actual intercourse or in the pages of books, inspires the craving to which the powers are then within limits found to respond. In this principle of education, however, we are using the second meaning of perfection, that of the higher or more gifted nature as contrasted with the lower or less gifted. 'Perfect yourself' means in this connection, take care that you do not act as a person less highly developed than you really are.

3. What, then, is the exact relation of perfection to goodness? Both in its absolute and its comparative meanings it is a conception which belongs not to morality as such, but to the materials out of which morality is constituted. Take 'perfect' as equivalent to 'best,' then, as we have seen, perfection is equally involved in every good action. The good is always the best. Morality discards the degrees of comparison which are found in the grammar. What is right is perfect. And the perfection of the action consists in its being what it is, and not something different. To bake a loaf, and to bake it well, are one and the same thing: if I have not baked it well, I have not *baked* it at all—I have half baked it, and made something different from bread. Perfection in this sense adds nothing to the contents of an act, but is like the auditor's mark which signifies that an entry is what it pretends to be. By perfection we mean therefore that an act is done according to its own law, or natural way of operation. What is implied in this phrase may be explained by a few illustrations. All the human powers work according to their laws, and may be said to have their own ends. There are the physical laws of the body, whose end is health, and the emotional laws by which, for instance, pity stretches out the hand to relieve, or anger clenches the fist. In the same way there are the laws of thinking and imagination, which

have their special ends in knowledge and art. And whether a faculty is at its highest or not it still operates according to its own nature. Now it is this natural operation of a power which we mean by its being perfect. But such perfection is not morality, but the materials of which morality is made. There is nothing moral in health, or pity, or thinking, or production of beauty. These are all given facts: the operation of these powers, so far as they themselves are concerned, is entirely outside the sphere of morality. Morality does not make health, nor does it teach how to think or to produce. But it uses all these powers, acting according to their own laws. Perfection is therefore the material of morality, but it does not contain any element of the criterion of goodness. The case is the reverse. To what extent the powers are to be exercised is determined by the criterion of right; what is the actual nature of the acts so done is determined by the law of perfection, according to which, each under its own circumstances, the powers employed operate. Perfection therefore is not an ethical conception, but a pathological.

4. This is more obviously the case when we recognise, in the other sense of perfection, degrees of perfection and imperfection. Such differences are differences not in the ethical, but in the pathological order. They make the act performed different, but do not alter its value. They are differences of gifts, in the widest sense, of natural endowment, of fortune, of position, of opportunity, in virtue of which one man ranks higher than another, though not better than another. By what standard the differences of development are measured we need not inquire: partly it is rarity of gifts, partly their later development, partly their implying others which do not in their turn imply the former, and are ranked as lower, as, for instance, the higher gifts of intellect depend on the lower gifts of health, but these may be found without intellect. The distinctions of perfec-

tion are therefore distinctions of fact, which alter the particular aspect of morality, but do not make any difference to it in respect of morality in its especial characteristic of equilibrium. Take away from respectable men in various stations, from the highest to the lowest, all that they owe to mere gifts, and their moral value will not be found to differ much on the whole, though their contributions to the work of society may be at different levels.

An apparent difficulty is offered by the presence of formed dispositions of mind, which undoubtedly enter into the pathological basis of good conduct, but are themselves acquired, and acquired by previous exercise of will. How, then, can we say that differences of perfection are differences of gift? But under differences of gifts are included the differences of feelings and emotions, with which our natures are very variously endowed. Now, though it is true that habits depend on will, yet the differences in perfection of dispositions depend on the emotional endowment. Such a difference is, for instance, that which exists between the nature which moves spontaneously and without friction, and that which always goes through some struggle.

Whether, then, the disposition shall be in one form rather than another, plainly results from the particular emotional endowment, taken in connection, of course, with the position in which a man has been placed, and the opportunities presented to him. Some men can never get to move spontaneously; others by constant cultivation of feelings which are naturally manageable learn to reduce them to a more or less spontaneous form; others are born with sunny natures, which need no cultivation, but are moral from the beginning. Hence if we are comparing persons who are all good, their differences of perfection all resolve into differences of gifts. It is true that this only distinguishes between good persons, but that is all we seek to do. Between good men and bad men the differences depend not only on gifts, but on volition;

but these differences are not differences of perfection, but of goodness and wickedness.

5. The two uses of the conception of perfection agree, it will be observed, in representing what is given, or pathological, as against its regulation and use in conduct. Far the more practically important is the idea of a comparison of gifts. I have already illustrated the ambiguity with which we apply the terms good and bad both to the pathological and the ethical differences. Later on we shall see how the differences of natural endowment that arise lie at the basis of progress. There is no need to further exemplify the variety of conduct in every moral order which depends on this variety in the basis of conduct. I need only repeat how it brings all moral action under the same rule, so that the highest moral achievement of the hero is not different, morally speaking, from the humblest daily task of the labourer. It is the special gifts of character or opportunity which impose upon the hero his specific conduct—conduct which to himself would certainly appear in the light of a duty, however much the rest of the world may think to rank it higher.

It must be added, however, that mere energy of will is included in the natural elements which constitute perfection. The direction of the will to certain objects is what makes morality; mere energy of volition is a matter of gift. The combination of this with other gifts produces very different results. A man of strong will and very slight capacity may prove what we call a failure: one of weak will and splendid gifts may produce results far superior. On our view there is no real difficulty offered by the cases, though it might seem as if in attaching a high value to the former we did not judge him by conduct, but by his mere inward energy. In reality, his energy of will is represented in his achievement: a man of weak will and only equal capacities would have made even less of them than he. On the other hand, to compare our two cases together in respect of perfection

would be a matter of difficulty, because we have to compare not merely the other capacities (which we may suppose alike in kind), but the volitional energy as well, and the balance may be difficult to strike. In common language we should say it was difficult to balance the *merit* of the two persons, though we should perhaps easily give our failure the palm of merit over the man of fair average capacity and only moderate will.

6. (*b.*) *Merit.*—In close connection with the conception of perfection stands that of merit, introduced in the last paragraph. Though in reality a simple idea, it is attended with the greatest complexity, and has given rise to the greatest controversy, from the apparent divergence with which it is applied. On the one hand it expresses the magnitude of a moral achievement, so that an act of heroism is judged more meritorious than one of ordinary everyday virtue. Just as we ascribe greater merit to a book on account of its greatness, though it may not have cost more labour than another, so also the more splendid or massive or effective acts of virtue have a higher merit. On the other hand, in another set of our judgments we ascribe merit not to great acts, but to acts which are done in the face of strong temptation to do wrong. The weaker the flesh, the greater the merit if we do right.

In these two applications there is an apparent contradiction. The test of merit in the latter cases seems to be the difficulty of performance, and the consequent magnitude of the effort. The harder it is to rise early in the morning, the greater the merit in doing so. But in the former set of cases merit seems to increase with the virtue, while at the same time the process of moralisation diminishes the temptation to sin. The more virtuous a man is, the less inclined he is to be intemperate: the more courageous he is, the less likely is he to feel fear. By the test of effort he would

seem less meritorious: by the test of the greatness of his conduct he would have greater merit. Taking the former test, it has been common, therefore, to distinguish merit from virtue as depending on the effort, making of merit a kindly term of help and approval given by the men of fortunate calmness or habitual self-control to their less fortunate brothers with strong or ill-regulated impulses. On the other hand, taking the latter test, merit is supposed to have a special connection with virtue, so that the more virtuous action is the more meritorious.

7. Both these interpretations seem to me erroneous. The first plainly comprehends only one of the sets of judgments about merit, and omits the merit we attach to great moral achievements where there may be little or no struggle. The second commits the error of supposing merit to depend upon the degree of virtue, and assumes, therefore, either that virtue actually has degrees, or that in ascribing merit we are simply comparing the action with that of the average man with his strength and weakness, partly virtuous and partly vicious. But in the first place, virtue, if it means goodness, has no degrees, though it appears in many shapes; and secondly, we ascribe merit to an act in comparison with another act when both are equally good but the former is the more splendid. The apparent discrepancy of the two sets of judgments vanishes, however, upon reflection. The great achievement and the victory over strong temptations stand on the same level, they imply a higher perfection, the one of emotional or other gifts, the other of strength of will. Their merit lies in the height at which they stand above the average perfection of a good man. The average good man is so endowed and is so placed in position and opportunities that he does not do heroic acts: he is none the less virtuous for that, but he is not called upon to do them, and probably would fail if he were. In like manner his will is of moderate strength, though strong enough to keep him whole, and if he were placed

in the position of temptation he might therefore yield. Comparing good men with one another there are differences in the scale on which their conduct is built. These differences are those of perfection. Merit, therefore, is the measure of perfection, it expresses the interval which separates the meritorious from the average. It is a conventional mark by which not the virtue but the perfection of actions can be compared, holding a relation to perfection itself like that of the degrees marked on a thermometer to the actual intervals of temperature.

II.—PLEASURE.

8. (*a.*) *The controversy about hedonism.*—To determine the position of pleasure in the end is in itself a task of great difficulty, and it is rendered more difficult by the controversy which has gathered round the question. That controversy a writer who was expounding an ethical system which either asserted or denied pleasure to be the end might be excused if he ignored. But in an inquiry like the present, which seeks to describe by slow degrees the whole nature of the end by showing what are the elements involved in it, this course seems impossible. The end not only is, but may be, I believe, justly estimated in terms of pleasure; but occupying a point of view different from that of hedonism, I am compelled, at the risk of introducing critical matter, to consider the value of the very influential arguments at present brought against that class of theories. The fundamental assumption of the principle of the greatest happiness, or, as it is explained to be, the greatest possible sum of pleasure, seems to me to be that pleasure is some one kind of thing everywhere, varying only in quantity. This assumption is untenable, but it is met by arguments which do not directly controvert the assumption itself, but raise other issues, which, though of great importance, seem not to be really relevant.

9. Succinctly stated, some of these arguments, which are found in various writers, but with greatest fulness and insistence in the writings of the late T. H. Green, are the following. They are directed against the greatest sum of pleasures, partly in its character of object, and partly in that of criterion of morality. Against the theorem that the object of desire is always pleasure, it is held that in all action there is a self or self-conscious person which directs itself towards some object as something in which it finds its good or satisfaction. Even where the object sought is a pleasure, as it sometimes is (the action of the voluptuary is an instance), it is because in this direction the good of the self is supposed to lie.[1] This self is permanent: pleasures stand in antithesis to it as mere feelings which are transitory, and therefore cannot be combined into a sum in enjoyment. "Pleasures can be added together in thought, but not in enjoyment." "However numerous the sources of a state of pleasant feeling, it is one, and is over before another can be enjoyed."[2] The sum of pleasures is therefore not a possible object of desire, because it cannot itself be a single pleasure. And it is added, a greatest sum of pleasures is a conception of still greater difficulty, because pleasures admit of indefinite increase,[3] and their sum can never therefore be the greatest possible.

10. Now it must be admitted that if desire is for pleasure *and nothing else*, the argument that a sum of pleasures cannot be desired because it is not a pleasure is completely convincing. Just because a sum of pleasures cannot be enjoyed as a sum, the desire for it is desire for pleasure and something more, viz., for pleasure occurring at different times.[4] At the same time the

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 167.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 236; cp. pp. 242, 245.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 401.
[4] Mr. Sidgwick mistakes here, I think, the point of Green's argument (*Methods of Ethics*, p. 130, ed. iii.). Mr. Sidgwick denies that "the possibility of realising the hedonistic end is at all affected by the necessity of realising it in successive parts." Nor I believe is it: but Green is arguing

argument is weakened by introducing the irrelevant notion of the transiency of pleasure. It is not their transiency which prevents a sum of pleasures from being desired: we might still imagine a series of pleasures and desire their pleasantness, which we should enjoy in parts. Pleasures are no more and no less transitory than any other mental event of which we may recall the idea, but not the reality, and all our ends equally are attained only in successive parts. The reason why a series of pleasures cannot form a single pleasure is not that they are transient, but that they are pleasures together with a higher idea, that of existing in a series and pursuing a continuous plan.

But though if all desire is for nothing but pleasure the sum of pleasures cannot be the ultimate object of conduct, the argument does not prove that the sum of pleasures could not be the criterion of conduct. It could only do so in the eyes of those who maintain that a sum of pleasures is impossible because the summation cannot be effected. Now I am not concerned to hold a brief for particular Utilitarian writers, or to defend their inconsistencies, but am dealing with Utilitarianism as a type of ethical thinking: and with regard to the idea of a greatest sum of pleasures there are two remarks to make. There is nothing in the idea of a sum of pleasures, though some may have so understood it, which requires that the pleasures should all be combined into one total result. It must be admitted that 'sum' is an unfortunate word; but a series of pleasures is properly nothing more than an aggregate or combination of pleasures, partly successive, partly co-existent. The reason why such an aggregate tends to be called a sum, and even treated as such, is found in what I have indicated as the fundamental assumption of hedonism, that pleasure is always the same

that the hedonistic end is inconsistent with the doctrine that desire is always for pleasure. (The argument does not, as I point out, apply to Mr. Sidgwick's own view.)

thing varying only in quantity, so that an aggregate of pleasures might, if we had an appropriate means of measuring pleasure, be read off in terms of some metrical unit, and actually added together. In the next place, the objection against the greatest possible happiness on the ground that the sum of pleasures can be increased indefinitely appears to rest on a misconception. The greatest possible happiness does not or need not mean a happiness than which no greater is possible (which would be an absurdity), but the happiness which is greatest under the given conditions. The conditions supply a limit, for if we attempted to increase the pleasure of one person or of one of his faculties beyond a certain point, that of other persons, or of his other faculties, would be found to decline. A maximum of happiness is a mathematical idea implying a limiting position on either side of which the sum of happiness falls away.[1]

11. The force of the arguments can only properly be appreciated by remembering that they are part of a general polemic against the principle of individualism in psychology. In the professed psychology of most hedonistic writers mental states are treated as nothing but events in a mind which is a mere succession of events. Their arguments depend for their plausibility on these mental states being more than mere events, upon their having contents or characters; but when we turn to their theories of mind we find nothing but isolated and independent occurrences. Now in opposing this psychological individualism the anti-hedonistic theories are enforcing a true principle. On this supposition we could not explain any connection at all between mental states, still less could we account for the combination of pleasures into a sum: mental states can cohere only in virtue of their characters. I may explain by an illustration: a

[1] Thus if we represent the acts of a society by the abscissæ, and the corresponding pleasures by the ordinates of a curve, the moral position will be a maximum point on the curve lying between all deflections on either side.

number of bodies placed on the ground belong to a group of bodies only in virtue of each having a certain spatial character called position. Considered as isolated, they neither form a group of themselves, nor could the mind combine them into a group. Put down five units on the paper. So far as we regard only the writing down of each unit, they do not form five units: they do so only in virtue of their numerical character, which allows them to be added. Mental events, as events, correspond to the separate acts of writing the units: all mental products arise, on the other hand, from a combination among events in virtue of their contents. Hence if we are to prove that pleasures cannot form a sum or aggregate, it must be by showing that on this psychological theory there is nothing to show how pleasures can be combined at all. While if we are to prove that pleasures do not form a mere sum, it must be by showing that their differences are more than merely quantitative.

12. So far as our polemic rests on the principle that mere events cannot combine, it is valid. But instead of proving that pleasures do not form a sum because they are not merely all pleasures, but different kinds of pleasures, it denies that they can form a sum because they are simply feelings; it insists that to imagine a sum of feelings depends on the presence of a permanent self which lives through the series.[1] Now if this only means that a succession of feelings or sensations could never yield the conception of a sum apprehended as a sum, it is quite true, but irrelevant. For such an idea, it is true, we require much more than sensation: we require memory, comparison, perception, the idea of a self. But this is only saying morality requires much more than mere sensation. And it is open to two defects. It depreciates

[1] Compare, for verification of this, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 236—"Desire for a sum or series of pleasures is only possible so far as upon sundry desires, each excited by imagination of a particular pleasure, there supervenes in a man a desire not excited by any such imagination—a desire for self-satisfaction."

sensations by tacitly assuming them to be mere events, and therefore holds that they cannot account for any further product; and in doing so it is fighting its adversaries with their own weapons, treating mental events as mere events. And secondly, it introduces the idea of a permanent self as something superior to mere sensations, whereas perhaps this self itself is elaborated from sensational elements. On the other hand, if the proposition means that a mind which only had sensations could not have a sum of sensations, this I must deny. It would not, it is true, feel them *as a sum*, but it would feel them in the only way in which a sum could be an experience of a merely feeling consciousness. There are three points of view we must distinguish: there is the point of view of the spectator to whom the feelings would form a sum, just as he could sum the movements of a body into one whole. There is the point of view of the developed mind which can apprehend its feelings under the form of a sum. And there is the feeling consciousness, which is more than the object as viewed by the spectator, and less than the subject which is aware of its states as a sum. It does not feel its feelings as continuous, but it feels them continuously, not as a succession, but successively or in succession. If we refer to our organic sensations, which are the nearest approach in our human experience to pure sensation (such a feeling as we have when we say we do not feel anyhow particularly), we can verify the possibility of feeling continuously, though of course we are not aware of the continuity as such, which would imply being aware of differences as such.

13. The polemic, therefore, while it is right in opposing individualism, seems to me to assign wrong reasons for rejecting the hedonistic conceptions. The real reason is not that pleasures cannot be combined, for in fact they can, but that if understood on the presumption of individualism, they could not possibly be combined. We have really to show that the pleasures of the hedonists have

no existence in fact. Until this is done I am persuaded the two parties cannot understand each other. For Utilitarian writers, though they speak of pleasures in the language of psychology, treat them as the familiar facts we know: they treat them as they really exist. Moreover, they even credit them with all the characteristics which they present in our experience when they have been operated on by processes much higher than mere sensation. It cannot be doubted that we do combine our pleasures and compare combinations of them with one another. Hence if we are to understand the reasoning, we must drop the psychological theory and think of the concrete facts the writers describe. If we are to test the theoretic result to which this mixture of fidelity to facts with erroneous psychology leads, it is not enough simply to show that pleasures on this theory could not yield the desired result, but we must examine whether their theoretical assumptions are themselves correct. I believe that the idea of the greatest sum of pleasures as the ultimate test of conduct depends on neglecting a cardinal fact that pleasures differ in kind, and cannot therefore be compared merely in respect of intensity.

14. (*b.*) *The pleasure-formula of the end.*—Taking first the claim of pleasure to be the criterion of morality, I shall show that the end may always be represented as pleasure, but that so understood it is not an independent test, because of additional quality other than mere intensity of pleasantness required to determine the pleasures themselves.

One aspect of the matter may be dismissed in few words. 'A pleasure' and 'pleasures' in the plural are often used as equivalent to the pleasant sensations. Such pleasures obviously differ in kind, and a sum or combination of them is nothing but a combination of pleasurable feelings, feelings of gratified hunger, ambition, or the like. These feelings cannot be actually *added* either in thought

or in enjoyment, because where they do not simply differ in intensity they are incommensurable. A system of them which should be a criterion of conduct would represent the feelings resulting from good conduct, and be determined therefore by good conduct itself.

15. Pleasure in the proper sense, however, means not a pleasant feeling, but its pleasantness: as such it is only an element in sensation: but the same thing is true of it as is true of the pleasant feeling: it is subject to differences not only of degree but of kind. What the psychological character of pleasure is I need not describe with more detail or exactness than is necessary for ethical purposes. Psychologists agree in distinguishing in every sensation or feeling its *quality*, which always exists with a certain intensity, and its *tone*. Thus in a sensation of red, redness is the quality of the sensation. The quality of a simple feeling of sense depends on its origin, whether it belongs to one of the senses or is an organic feeling. Pleasure and pain, on the other hand, are tones of sensations or feelings, and they obviously vary in intensity. Now it is of the utmost importance to observe that pleasure and pain are very inadequate terms to describe tones of feelings. The tones of colours and sounds, for instance, are more naturally represented by the mood of mind they suggest: red has a warm tone, black a sad, grey a sober, the organ a solemn tone.[1] Sometimes a feeling is so indefinite in tone as to be no more than a vague 'comfort' or 'discomfort': while the tone may rise to such a condition that only such words as 'bliss' or 'rapture' seem proper to describe it. Part of the repugnance of the mind to accept pleasure as the end arises from the loose and somewhat unnatural use of the term pleasure to describe tones which have merely a general affinity with the commoner kinds of pleasure, but are very unlike the coarser and more palpable pleasures to which the term pleasure is often confined.

[1] See on this subject Wundt, *Phys. Psych.*, i., p. 485 (ed. ii.).

Whether there are any feelings neutral in respect of pleasure and pain is an undecided question, which, however, seems to arise partly from the same confusion. We may be unable to detect pleasure or pain (though in my own experience I believe I can usually do so), but sensations without any tone at all do not seem to exist.

16. Pleasure and pain depend not only on the quality and quantity of the feeling of which they form an element, but on the whole condition of the mind. This is the obvious truth of the doctrine called the relativity of pleasures. But the more intimate connection of pleasure with the mind is best expressed in the hypothesis of Lotze, that it depends on an agreement between the effects of a stimulus with any of the conditions to which the natural exercise of bodily or mental life is attached.[1] Pleasure is a sign of such agreement, pain of disturbance. They plainly stand in intimate connection with the mass of ideas which in a later stage of the mind's history give rise to the self. They are therefore sometimes regarded as due to an expansion or contraction, respectively, of this psychical mass when a new idea or feeling is presented or brought in contact with it. But whether the relation involved in pleasure is more properly described as harmony or as expansion, or whether a feeling is pleasant when it continues the movement of the mind in the direction which at the moment the mind has, for whatever reason, taken up, we need not inquire.[2] It is enough to see that pleasure indicates the agreement of a feeling with the mind; and that consequently an activity is pleasant which agrees with the set of a man's character.

17. These tones of pleasure and pain differ not only in intensity but in kind according to the kind of sensation they accompany. They are functions not only of

[1] Lotze, *Medicinische Psychologie*, p. 234. The idea is of course not new. Cp. Kant, *Anthropologie*, Bd. VII., ii., p. 144 (ed. Rosenkranz and Schubert).

[2] Mr. Bradley's article in *Mind*, xiii., contains a discussion of the nature of pleasure ('On Pleasure, Pain, Desire and Volition').

the intensity but of the quality of the sensation. We need only appeal to experience to be convinced that they have always a special quality or colour, just as the sweetness of an apple differs from that of a pear not merely in degree but in its character. The pleasure of thinking is of a different quality from the pleasure of eating. At the same time there are resemblances between the qualities of pleasures. There are even analogies between different pleasures, in virtue of which it is we can transfer the language of one sensation to another, speaking of warmth of colour and brilliancy of sound.[1] For proof of the differences of quality in pleasure I can only refer to experience, to such distinctions of pleasure as we experience, for instance, in drinking different wines. How the differences of quality arise, is a matter which does not concern us here. Supposing they could be explained by differences of degree in the cause of the sensation, they still remain differences of kind, just as red light is different in kind from blue light, though the difference may be numerically expressed. Some pleasures and pains indeed seem to depend on a rhythm in the intensity of the sensation, as, *e.g.*, a throbbing pain. But with these complexities in determining pleasure we have not to do. What is essential for the purpose is to note the further difference between the throbbing pain of a fester and of a toothache. Pleasures, therefore, of the same quality differ in intensity only, otherwise they differ in quality as well.

Before further explanation, let us see what result follows from these propositions. The tone, with its quality and intensity, is never found apart in our experience from the sensation, but is only one element in a single whole. But supposing the separation to be made, as it actually is, then a system or combination of pleasures corresponding to the sensations which are produced by the identity of good

[1] The remark is due to Prof. Wundt (*Phys. Psych.*, i. p. 487), who does not, however, sanction my inference from the fact to similar qualities of pleasure.

conduct represents the end as combined in terms of pleasure. But every such pleasure being a function of the sensation in which it is an element, the sum of pleasures is made up of pleasures every one of which is qualified as that which is produced by a certain activity. The sum of pleasures, therefore, reintroduces the distinctions and the contents of the moral order, and though an expression of the criterion of conduct, is therefore, like perfection, not an independent criterion. What we have done in thus representing the end as pleasure is in mathematical language to substitute in the formula for good conduct, which is a function of the act, the pleasure-value of each act.

18. But the assertion that pleasure as equivalent to pleasantness differs in kind, though supported by the high authority of Lotze, is so opposed to the current views that it must be further explained. The element of quality in pleasure is best described by that name, but it may be *verified* more easily in experience as what I may call the *preferability* of a pleasure. The term is open to objection. Used of minds which are lower than our own the term preferability might be unmeaning. And secondly, it may suggest that there is an inherent moral value in every pleasure. I use the term for want of a better, because it is upon this element of quality that preferability depends, and not in order to convey the idea that the pleasure *ought* to be preferred. To suppose that there is an original value in pleasure, in virtue of which pleasures can themselves be distinguished as higher and lower, involves so palpable an error that it may be doubted if any one has ever seriously entertained the view. Higher and lower is an antithesis which is established by morality itself. The higher pleasure is that which, in a given case, morality approves, as against another which it rejects. If we took the pleasures by themselves apart from the moral judgment upon them, it is impossible to rebut the question, who is to

say that the drunkard has a lower pleasure than the philosopher?

> "Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious;
> O'er all the ills of life victorious."

On the contrary, the moral or objective preferability of a pleasure is determined by its place in the order of pleasures which is the pleasure-formula of the end. And as the moral value of an act depends on what it is and how it is related to the rest of the moral order, so the moral value of a pleasure depends on what kind of pleasure it is, whether of generosity or debauchery, or the like. Since, however, the good man's mind reflects the moral order, his taste will distinguish pleasures according to the distinctions of value which morality establishes amongst them. And it was, I suppose, this simple truth, and nothing more profound or precise, which both Plato and Mill intended to convey when they based the differences of pleasures in kind upon the decision of the wise man who had experience of them all. It must be added that the criterion remains a truism, unless it is shown to depend on the elementary difference in the qualities of pleasures which are weighed one against another in the system before the pleasures can acquire moral value.

It is thus morality itself which settles which of two pleasures ought to be preferred. The initial contrast between tones of feeling is that of pleasure against pain: within these broad distinctions arise the minor distinctions of kind, so that we can always discover in the pleasure or pain of any feeling the two elements of intensity and preferability. And on this second element the moral estimation of pleasure depends.

19. We have still, however, to meet a question which may be asked by those who hold the ultimate test to be the greatest sum of pleasantness. Granted pleasures differ in kind, why should they not still be estimated in

units of pleasantness, just as weight may be represented numerically, though depending not only on bulk, but on *specific* gravity? Now it may be admitted at once that it is not inconceivable that the intensity of pleasure should be registered numerically, nor that some numerical equivalent should be found for the qualities of pleasure. The feat has not been accomplished yet, but looking at the success with which non-numerical phenomena are reduced to figures, we have to admit it as conceivable. But we observe also that the higher we rise in the scale of complexity from mechanical to organic nature the more distinct is the growth of a principle of selection or distribution which the members of a combination must follow in order to produce a given quantitative result. We can combine together substances of any bulk and specific gravity without the substances affecting one another: we can vary the substances in a thousand different ways. The number which represents the specific gravity acts as a mere multiplier of the bulk. The expansion of a body under heat depends upon a constant called the co-efficient of expansion, and specific to each substance. This constant does not indeed act as a mere multiplier, but still, if we have to expand by a certain amount a row of metal bars of a given length, we can alter the composition of the row by proper care indefinitely. When, however, we come to chemistry, the case is different: we find that bodies select their partners by special affinities, they combine with each other only on certain terms. Accordingly, when we know the components of a substance and their proportions, we can represent the compound numerically, because we have equivalents for the separate elements. But the mere atomic equivalent of the compound tells us nothing of the composition. We could obtain the equivalent of sulphuric acid (98) in many ways, but we could only get sulphuric acid by combining together hydrogen and sulphur and oxygen, and in the proportions of 2, 1, and 4.

In organisms this principle of selection is carried still further. If we are determining what food is most nutritious for an animal, we have to look not merely to its bulk, but to the kinds of food wanted by the animal. We might express the nutritiousness of various foods by numbers, but the numerical equivalent of food would tell us nothing unless we knew the kinds of food which have to be combined with one another to suit the animal. We might produce the same numerical sum by a sufficient bulk of a quite indigestible food. In the same way, in the numerical phrase 'one man lives more than another,' we include not merely longer or more intense life, but a certain selection of functions.

20. Now to regard the greatest sum of pleasures as the test of conduct, supposing we could express it in units of pleasure, would be like declaring that when you had an atomic weight of 98 you had sulphuric acid. The numerical test would be useless till we knew what elements were to be combined, and in what proportion. Similarly till we know what kinds of activities (and therefore what kinds of pleasures) go with one another to form the end, the greatest sum of pleasures will give us only the equivalent of the end, but will not tell us what the composition of the end is, still less how to get it. Or to put the matter more simply, since acts depend on character, when we know what the characters of persons are, and how they are combined in morality, we can estimate the corresponding sum of pleasures: which will be the maximum happiness because it represents the solution of the problem how best to satisfy all the characters together. But if we merely know the sum of pleasures, we know nothing of the characters which are the condition.[1]

21. Thus we can reaffirm our conclusion that the sum

[1] Though I have worked out the matter in my own way, the general result is the same as that of Mr. Stephen. See *Science of Ethics*, c. IX., ii., especially paragraphs 8–12. And also c. X., paragraphs 4–6. Mr. Stephen does not, however, recognise the distinction of pleasures in kind.

of pleasures considered simply in their intensity cannot give a criterion of morality at all. They cannot do so because pleasures which differ only in intensity have no existence, and the pleasures we know in fact combine in ways not determined by mere intensity. On the other hand, the end can always be expressed in a pleasure-formula, but that formula is not independent of good conduct or character itself, for we can only describe its component pleasures by reference to the conduct or character which produces them. We have to say that those pleasures are good which are the pleasures of doing good actions, or are such as the good man likes. Nor, it must be added, is it a natural way of expressing the end, for whereas pleasure depends on conduct, we make prominent not the conduct but the pleasure. It is as if in a chemical formula, instead of writing the names of the elements with their proportions as suffixes, we wrote down the numbers of the proportions with the names of the elements as suffixes, *e.g.*, sulphuric acid $2_H1_S4_O$ instead of H_2SO_4. Finally, it is to be observed that the popular conception of *happiness* avoids all the difficulties and complexities caused by setting up pleasure as the end, because in that conception pleasures and pains are never considered in abstraction from the conduct to which they belong and the character which enjoys them.

22. Good conduct (that is, equilibrated conduct) is thus once more verified to be the real test of morality. But though the end as pleasure always implies the end as good conduct, must we go on to say that the standard or criterion of goodness involves pleasure? If pleasure is only a function of the act, is it not merely repeating the criterion to include in it any reference to pleasure? And this is the idea in the minds of those who, following Aristotle's splendid treatment of the problem of pleasure, have regarded pleasure as merely a concomitant closely attached to conduct, but not involved in it. To this it might indeed be answered, that the bare reference to the

quality of the conduct, as consisting, say, in stopping at the second glass, or whatever it may be, does not ensure that the act is done for its own sake, that the act might still be external, and before it can be really good the agent must take pleasure in it. But this objection has been already met when it was shown that the outwardly good act was a different kind of act when it was done as a merely outward action, and when it proceeded from a right sentiment.[1]

To answer our question, let us note that it arises with regard to perfection also. Perfection by itself is not a criterion of goodness, but yet all good conduct is perfect. If, then, we want to know if an action is right, it is sufficient to ask if it is temperate, or just, or the like; and though if it is so it is also perfect, we need not refer to its perfection for an abstract criterion. It is the same with pleasure: we do not need pleasure for an abstract criterion. To add perfection or pleasure to the criterion is only adding that what we are testing is built upon certain pathological data, and that it is conduct which is chosen. But at the same time the abstract statement of the quality of good action is only gathered from the concrete standard itself, and it is this with which we compare a given concrete action. The difference between the two things is as if, wanting a wooden beam 20 feet long, we should say the criterion was 20 feet, or was 20 feet of wood. Pleasure, therefore, is part of the end by which in fact all conduct is judged, and belongs to it just because it is the end of *conduct*. Without the pleasure the standard of action would be something divorced from our experience, and if it is an abstraction to consider pleasure apart from the act, it is equally an abstraction to regard the act without its pleasure.

[1] See Bk. I., ch. ii., pp. 51, 52. Observe that the usefulness of pleasure as a *practical* criterion is that it enables us conveniently to say whether the act is done for its own sake or not, when all we are assured of is that its external aspect is that of a good act. If the agent does not feel the appropriate pleasure, it is a sign that his act does not proceed from a good character, and is really different from what it appears to be.

23. (*c.*) *Ethical and Pathological Pleasures.*—When the standard of conduct is thus represented by a pleasure-formula or law, in which the different parts of conduct are combined according to their pleasure-equivalent, the pleasures so used must be understood with a qualification. They are the pleasures proper to the volition itself, the pleasures of attainment, in distinction from the attendant or consequent feelings which any action may involve. These pleasures of attainment may be called *ethical* pleasures, because it is these which carry ethical value: the other pleasures and pains are *pathological*, because though they have an important bearing on the choice of the act, they do not by themselves make the act either good or bad. Courage is the classical illustration of the contrast. The ethical pleasure is the enjoyment or attainment of the brave act, a pleasure made up partly of the satisfaction of the claims of patriotism, or honour, partly of the actual pleasure in exercise and self-defence. Though so far superior in preferableness that it is this pleasure which is chosen, it is probably far inferior in intensity to the attendant circumstances of pain, against which also the attendant pleasures of reputation and admiration are of little account. An indefinite variation in these attendant feelings is possible according to the person, and they may be altogether absent; the act is to be done in spite of them. They subsist, but the duty of the individual is not performed unless he prevents their affecting his action. Such incidental pleasures and pains arise from the many points of attachment which a man's character offers to a proposed action. While it furthers some, the action may repress other parts of the character. The pains he suffers in doing right are the price he pays for the manysidedness of his nature. In the case in question, the prospect of danger by its contact with his inclination for life is painful; but the act when presented to the whole mass of moral sentiments (this whole mass of sentiments including, of course, the inclination

for life as it falls into its place) is found to be suitable and is pleasant. The ethical pleasure represents the total reaction of character, the attendant pains and pleasures are sufferings and enjoyments which arise from the contraction or expansion of certain parts incidental to this reaction.

24. In calling pleasures of attainment ethical, I am not imagining a new and peculiar kind of pleasure, but simply distinguishing those pleasures which are proper to the volition itself from among all the materials of pleasures and pains which an action involves. All of these belong to the action, but only certain selected ones which concern the action as willed have ethical value. This selection is performed by the will itself.

Pleasures and pains fall into two classes (differing only as to their origin), which may be called active and passive. Active pleasures are those which are proper to an act and gratify an impulse, as, *e.g.*, the pleasure of eating gratifies the impulse to eat: passive pleasures are those of enjoyment, which simply occur to us, either coming to us from without, like the pleasure of hearing music, or when produced by our acts, still not gratifying the impulse which produced the act, as when a man enters into conversation with a stranger and discovers they have common friends, or entertains an angel unawares. Corresponding to these two classes of pleasures, pains may be distinguished as the active pains of want which stimulate to action, and the passive pains of suffering. Now the pleasures of attainment are always pleasures of gratification, but they are not mere pleasures of gratification, for they gratify a sentiment which is directed towards an object previously present in idea. Because the will converts an idea into a reality, the pleasure of the volition is properly described as one of attainment: and in consequence of this process, whenever we have leisure for reflection the pleasure of volition is coloured by what is called the consciousness of attainment. This is why the pleasure has ethical value (whether good or bad). For a

non-volitional consciousness active and passive feelings are on the same level, they make up a certain quantum of feeling: the taste of the cheese and the pain of confinement in the trap leave the mouse in merely a certain state of happiness or misery: the dog who gratified himself by attacking his own reflection in the water would have this pleasure mixed up with the misery of losing his meat, but he could hardly 'count himself to have attained.' But while the volitional consciousness in its turn feels all the feelings belonging to an action as a certain quantum of pleasure and pain, it can separate the pleasure of the object itself as it was willed from the attendant feelings.

25. The commonest kind of incidental feeling is the enjoyment or suffering caused to one set of feelings by an act of duty, as when a person is compelled, like Jeanie Deans, to expose a friend, or when, to quote a previous example, the act of courage brings him reputation amongst his fellows. But pains of want and pleasures of gratification can themselves be incidental, and sink to the rank of mere sufferings and enjoyments. Thus the pain of hunger in a starving man may become a mere incident in the performance of a manly duty of endurance when circumstances render it impossible to gratify his want. The endurance of hunger in the ten minutes before dinner is a less serious example. The case is the same with certain pleasures when, as often happens, duty coincides with a man's wish for personal advantage, but the direct pursuit of his advantage as such is unlawful. In accepting an office which brings high emoluments, I may have the desire for the money, but it may be right for me to accept or reject the office irrespective of whether I shall gain or lose by it. This, it must be observed, is different from those cases where pursuit of profit is legitimate: thus a statesman may desire office for its income, but only on the condition that he can so best serve his country: his act is determined by both desires compounded,

and if he is free from cant he will not seek to palliate his motive, nor has any one a right to blame him.[1]

26. The pleasure of attainment is thus a selection among other pleasures and pains. It is in fact the gratification of an active or moral sentiment, whether that sentiment is right or wrong. It is important, therefore, to give it the credit of being exactly what it is, and at the same time not to suppose it more than it is. In the first place, the ethical pleasure is not to be identified with the mere pleasure of doing right, the pleasure derived from the explicit consciousness that the act is presented by the law or accords with the whole system of good conduct. Cases may and do occur in which the only pleasure of the act is this kind of satisfaction (often a melancholy one). But these are only special cases of reflective conduct. On the other hand, the pleasure of attainment *is* identical with the feeling of approbation, not as that feeling is felt in contemplating the idea of an action, but as it is felt in the enjoyment of the action itself. We call it a pleasure of approbation or attainment according as we take either of two different points of view. The pleasure depends both on the quality of the act and the character of the person. When we think first of the latter, and contemplate the agent as going out towards and adopting the act, we call the pleasure that of approbation. When we think of the act itself, we call the pleasure proper to it the pleasure of attainment. With the good man the pleasure of a good action is the pleasure of moral approbation: with the bad man the pleasure of attainment is equivalent to what in him is

[1] On the subject of this subsection (*c*) compare the interesting chapter (xii.) in J. Grote's *Treatise on the Moral Ideals*. I have followed his use of the terms gratification and enjoyment. I cannot, however, follow his view of the relation between the two classes of pleasures. The pleasure of gratification might, he thinks, exist, even if the local pleasures (those of enjoyment) were destroyed. Hunger might be gratified even if the organs of taste were destroyed. True; but could it, if the other sensations (organic sensations) connected with eating were destroyed? But these are on the same level as taste. Conversely, if I will to taste, the local pleasure is the pleasure of gratification.

approbation, only that his approbation is perverted: when a man does an act against his better feelings his character is divided within itself. Taking, then, for simplicity the case of the good man, we know that the moral sentiments are nothing but a refinement and regulation of his ordinary impulses. Their approbation is therefore nothing but the pleasure which belongs to the acts which they prescribe. Only the mistaken idea of austerity and compulsion which we associate with the moral sense, which is in reality the natural operation of trained feelings, can conceal this truth. The pleasure of the moral feelings may be quite a lower pleasure, like the pleasure of eating, or it may be a higher pleasure, like that of bravery, but into this, as we have seen, enters the lower pleasure of fighting. But it is always identical with the pleasure of approbation. Witness the case of Little Jack Horner, who, when he had pulled out a plum, expressed his gratification by saying, "What a good boy am I." It is true he came perilously near to the fault of spiritual pride, but his youth will exempt him from suspicion, and acquit the illustration of being imperfect.

27. Reverting to the main course of the argument, it is the ethical pleasures or pleasures of attainment which enter into the pleasure-formula of conduct as possessing ethical value. Incidental pleasures and pains have not any ethical value in themselves. The pleasure which comes to me from another person is not necessarily morally good: if it is produced by a bad act it is wrong. On the other hand, if I am a right-minded person, I shall regard with equanimity a pain which accrues to me unavoidably in the performance of right conduct. But though only ethical pleasures have value in themselves, they are not independent of the incidental feelings, but in fact depend upon these feelings. The latter are themselves considered in determining what acts are to be performed, for they are an essential part of the action. How pleasures affect the determination of morality is a ques-

tion which will meet us later in tracing the origin of moral distinctions. But we have seen that all morality means an adjustment in which certain things are given up for purposes unattainable otherwise. Correspondingly we have pains entering into the actions which are yet the issue of the character as a whole. The ethical pleasure represents the effective pleasure-value of the action, but what that effective pleasure shall be depends on every circumstance. A mechanical illustration will perhaps make the relation of the ethical to the passive feelings clearer. In the steam-engine, under the most favourable circumstances, only one quarter at most of the heat is converted into work, but the work produced itself depends on the whole amount of heat required under the conditions of the machine's structure. In the same way, the ethical pleasure is the element of pleasure-work in the whole action, but what that pleasure is must be settled by all the conditions under which the pleasure is to be produced.

28. Hence a further result. The pleasure-formula of the end represents the end in terms of all the ethical pleasures secured by good action. But now we can see how morality can be expressed in terms of all the pleasures and pains involved in action, reckoning the purely ethical pleasure among the rest. For every pleasure is an inducement to persistence, every pain an inducement to change. Consequently, since the society of good persons (or, what is the same thing, the kingdom of powers within a good man's own mind) acquiesce in the moral order as the equilibrium in which all their claims are gratified as far as may be, it follows that the order of good conduct represents the maximum of happiness, counting pain as a set off against pleasure. Morality represents the greatest possible excess of pleasure over pain in the only way in which that maximum is attainable or can be contemplated, and conversely its attainment means in all good men the doing of certain actions called

good with their corresponding ethical or effective pleasures. Instead of starting with the vague and undefined assumption of a maximum sum of pleasure as the end, if we take the end as it really exists, we find that this end involves the greatest happiness of the greatest number not as a primary definition, but as a necessary though secondary element.

29. Here seems to be the proper place to advert to a question which was left over from the preceding Book,[1] but has now practically answered itself—the question how far morality depends on the consequences of action. The consequences of an action make the action itself different; and we have seen that the question really turns on what consequences they are which are contemplated. It is now plain that they are consequences for character and conduct. If we take the common conception of consequences as the pleasurable and painful effects of conduct, these are not simply to be regarded in their intensity, but in their quality as well. Whether an act is right or wrong will depend on what sort of pleasures and pains it produces. Consequently, we are introducing into the statement of consequences the conditions of character (or, what is the same thing, of conduct) out of which these feelings are to arise. This is obviously the case if we consider only the ethical pleasures themselves. But since the ethical pleasures are in intimate connection with and depend upon all the pleasures and pains that result from conduct, the incidental feelings themselves are also subservient to the formation of good character.

30. (*d.*) *Pleasure and the Object of Action.*—Pleasure we found to be an integral part of the standard of morality: it was not itself an independent standard, and could serve only secondarily as a criterion for distinguishing one action from another: but it formed part of the standard just because that standard is one of conduct. Is

[1] See Bk. I., ch. ii., p. 42.

pleasure, then, also the object of conduct? We should expect the answer to be, that while pleasure is not the ground of our desiring the object, pleasure is part of the object, in so far as the object is the object of desire or will. If this is so, then the pleasure-formula of the end will describe the object of morality from the pleasure point of view: the end thus expressed can itself on occasion be the object, and it will include all the constituent elements which are the several objects of individual acts.

It is admitted that the idea before the mind in desire is pleasant. This pleasure, I shall maintain, is the object of desire, in the same sense that the idea itself is the object. If we choose to call by the name of object the result which is to be attained, the pleasure of this result is as much the object as the result itself. Why both the idea before the mind and its realisation are called object has been before explained,—because they have a common character. But the question of what the object of desire is turns upon the decision of what it is which is before the mind in desire. The difficulty of agreeing that the pleasure of the idea is part of the object arises from two sources, the one a confusion of the object of desire with the character or criterion of the object, the other a misunderstanding of how the ideal object is related to the result. Looking in the first place to the latter misapprehension, it is supposed that the idea before the mind is the idea *of* the result, a constructive imagination of what state of mind I shall be in when I have attained my end, the picture of some *future* state. Hence the belief that desire is for prospective pleasure. This belief is erroneous: the idea is not necessarily the idea of the result: for the most part it is a representation of which the elements are derived from the past: it is an idea of the result only in the sense that the result is this idea as it is realised. On the other hand, because it is false that the prospective pleasure must necessarily be part of the idea, the opposite conclusion is drawn, that desire is not for pleasure at all.

Now it is true that in order to distinguish one object from another we need to know what kind of an object it is: if we are to choose between eating and drinking, it is the element of food or drink which decides which is the more desirable. But to conclude from this that desire is not for pleasure is to confuse the actual idea before the mind in desire with its quality.

31. An illustration will help to guide us in determining the real position of pleasure. Supposing a party of five persons has been formed, and a sixth is wanted. I propose out of a number of persons a sixth, A, whom I know to be a person possessing certain qualities, say, to be a genial man or a good talker. A is chosen provided my companions approve, and their approval means that he is suitable to their tastes. Now what determines us to choose A, the reason why we choose him, is not his suitability, but his quality of geniality: but what we have before our minds is a genial person who is suitable. We could not *choose* him, unless we attached to him the idea of suitability: but at the same time that idea is only a function of his qualities as a man. Further, in thinking of what sort of a man A is, we might very often think of the future pleasure he would afford us, and might imagine to ourselves what a merry party we should be in his company. But this is not necessary to the choice. What we apprehend in A is his geniality and consequent suitability, and we read into this mainly the knowledge derived from the past: we may, or we may not, put into our apprehension of him the idea of future pleasure to be expected from his society. This example will be useful in clearing up the difficulties of the subject.

32. There are three questions which are involved. The first may be easily dismissed. Do we make pleasure the object in the sense that we desire an object (say an act of kindness) on the ground of its pleasure, representing to ourselves the pleasure as the reason for doing the act? In other words, is pleasure not merely that which

causes the desire, but is it put forward as the reason of the desire? The answer is, that we need not think about our reasons at all. In general we do not desire the pleasure on the ground of its being pleasure, but neither do we desire the kindness on the ground of its being kindness. We simply apprehend the kindness of the proposed act; and we need only apprehend the pleasure in the same way. It is not necessary again to labour the point that reflective conduct is exceptional.

The second question is more important. Is it the pleasure or the kindness which is the cause of the desire (though not apprehended *as* the cause)? We have here the same question as we discussed with respect to goodness. The answer is, that it is the kindness which determines the desire. To say that the pleasure is the cause would be in the first place to separate the pleasure from the feeling it accompanies. The pleasure is still the pleasure of doing a kindness, and is defined by its character. In the second place, to regard pleasure as the cause is to confuse a cause with a sign. The pleasure in the object is a function of the quality of the object (the kindness). It is not the effect of the kindness, but is simply the sign of the suitability of the object to the feelings of the agent, as the approval of our imagined guest was the sign that his qualities fell in with the wishes of his companions.

33. What, then, is the pleasure which is the object of desire? This is the third question. That it is not the prospective pleasure is, I think, clear as a psychological fact. In nearly all higher desires we do indeed think of prospective pleasures, these enter into the content or character of the idea. But this is not necessary. In the first place, we may think of such pleasures without having any desire, as a mere picture of the imagination. Conversely, many of the simpler forms of desire contain no such anticipations. Once more, when we do think of the future, what occupies our mind is very often the

unpleasant incidents of the action, and yet we desire. If a martyr at the stake thought of his prospective feelings at all, they would probably be mainly the painful ones of physical torture. Prospective pleasure, then, is an element only in certain objects ot desire, and not in all.

The pleasure which is part of the object of desire is that which is actually present in our minds, in contrast to the pain of want which stimulates to the action. It is sometimes called the motive pleasure, to distinguish it from the pleasure resulting from performance. What I am maintaining is, that this pleasure belongs to the ideal object, and is part of that object: it is the pleasure-tone of the represented feeling which we call the ideal object. It is ideal in the same sense as the idea to which it belongs, because it is contrasted with the feelings which prompt to the action. True, it is felt as a fact, but the idea before the mind is equally a fact. But the pleasure is the pleasure of the idea. It is ideal in the same way as an object present in perception may be idealised by entering into connection with ideas. I wish to eat a fruit which is before me, or to retain a feeling which is now in my consciousness; the fruit and the feeling are themselves real facts, but in entering into the object of desire, the eating of the fruit, the retention of the desire, they become idealised. They are not present now in the way they are desired to be. The pleasantness of the idea before the mind is in like manner the pleasure of the object, and is part of the object.

If, then, we call the pleasure which is always part of the object of desire or will the prospective pleasure (and I suspect that the two things are simply not distinguished in the current theories of desire), we are making the mistake of confounding the agent's mind with that of his spectator. To the spectator the pleasure before my mind is the foretaste of the pleasure I am to enjoy in the future: but into my own mind the picture of the *future* need not enter at all.

34. Hence pleasure is always a part of the desired or willed object. But this pleasure is not prospective pleasure: nor is it the cause of the desire; nor is it independent of or separable from the rest of the object. Its presence means that the object is an object of *desire* or *will*. And the pleasure is always the pleasure of the action itself. If, then, it is asked whether we desire pleasure or certain objects, the most natural answer is that we desire sometimes one and sometimes the other, according to whichever is more prominent in our minds. Moreover, the pleasure is not pleasure in general, but is my own pleasure, but it does not for that reason make my act a selfish act, any more than it is selfish of me to take my fair share of profits in a partnership, or in general to make the best of myself.

Here, too, we meet once more the difference between willing my own pleasure and that of another person.[1] When I will his pleasure (say by giving him a book), the pleasantness of the object to him is merely one among the other attributes of the object, just as near and just as remote from my feelings as the attribute that my object is a gift, or has to do with a book. The pleasantness of the object to him is quite unlike an anticipated feeling of pleasure on my own part. This is, I believe, the explanation of a curious phenomenon, that while we think it ignoble to seek after our own pleasure, we think it praiseworthy to give pleasure to another. But if pleasure for myself is an ignoble end, to procure another the chance of pleasure for himself should be so too. The ignobility of seeking for personal pleasure depends largely on the prejudice which the coarser pleasures throw over the rest: but the difference of our judgments in the two cases depends on what I have explained.

I may add a further result. Seeing that we cannot have an object of desire but pleasure is included in it, the so-called "paradox of hedonism," that pleasure is

[1] See before, Bk. II., ch. iv., sec. ii., p. 174.

lost by seeking after it, cannot be explained by holding that pleasure is not itself the object of desire, and that consequently pleasure is never in enjoyment what it is in idea. Whether we think of prospective pleasure or the pleasantness of an idea, it is true that the idea and the reality are very different; but this is equally true of every idea. An idea is never in reality what it is as idea. The explanation lies rather in pointing out how foolish it is to seek for what is a sign or an effect instead of seeking for the cause. If you want pleasure, think mainly of what it is that will bring it. To think mainly of the pleasure itself is like the mistake of treating the symptoms of a disease without finding out their cause. To pursue pleasure, therefore, is a method as clumsy and as likely to lead to disappointment as if, supposing I wished to find a warm and agreeable climate, I made inquiries for a place to which consumptive patients resorted.

35. The pleasure which is a part of the object of action is the pleasure which belongs to the proposed action itself, and is therefore the represented pleasure of attainment, or this pleasure as it exists in idea. Just so far as the incidental pleasures and pains are anticipated, so far will the object, as in the case of the martyr, reproduce the distinction of ethical and pathological pleasures. This represented ethical pleasure is the pleasure of approbation as that pleasure is felt at the idea of an action. In the case of the good man it is the pleasure of moral approbation, the pleasure of the moral sense. There is no need to enforce this point after what has been said on the topic before. But two questions of consistency arise out of it. Goodness, we found, means approbation by the good man. But if pleasure is always part of the object, and this pleasure is that of approbation, is not this equivalent to asserting that we desire a good object not merely for its own sake, but for the sake of its goodness? And secondly, how can it be consistent to deny (as I have denied) that the mind seeks in its objects its own good?

To the first question I reply in the negative. In desiring the object with its pleasure we do not desire its goodness as such: we desire it as pleasant but not as good or right. To desire it as right would mean to apprehend explicitly its connection with the rest of conduct. But we only feel this connection without reflecting upon it. The pleasure of approbation is nothing more than the suitability of a proposed idea to the moral sentiments. But going beyond this question, I think Kant's doctrine that morality must be done from the sense of duty or from respect for the law rests upon the truth that the pleasure in the object is the pleasure of rightness, and that he exaggerated it by confusing between the simple pleasure of approbation and the explicit apprehension of a duty as a duty.

Turning to the second question, the truth that we pursue the objects of action as pleasant may be properly expressed by the proposition that in these objects the mind seeks its good. But good means pleasure, and a present or momentary pleasure, however complicated the means by which that pleasure is determined. When it was before denied that the mind aimed at its good, this was in opposition to a theory which sharply distinguished the good from pleasure, as being the permanent satisfaction of a permanent self.

36. (*d.*) *Morality and Pain—Pessimism.* — There is one further aspect of the subject to consider. We have seen how pleasure forms an element in the end, and how pains enter into the determination of what pleasures are included in the pleasure-formula. What then is the relation to morality of pain? The question has partly been answered, but the answer needs some further expansion, for two reasons, both on its own account, and because of the special importance attached to pain in the theory of pessimism. In pronouncing on the value of pain the ordinary moral consciousness takes

up a perfectly simple attitude, to describe which is only to repeat moral commonplaces. We distinguish first of all between the pains of suffering and the active pains which prompt to good acts. These latter we refuse to consider apart from the results to which they lead. They are evil in themselves just so far as they are pain; but they cannot be truly considered by themselves. We are so far from thinking them bad that we should regard a life as unhealthy which did not feel these active wants. We take the pain of hunger with the pleasure of eating as being intimately connected according to the constitution of the organism. Active pains are thus the conditions of right conduct. When we come to passive pains we must further distinguish between the injuries which are caused by wrong, and the mere sufferings incidental to right action. The former ought not to have occurred, and by punishment we try to prevent their repetition. Sufferings which are incidental to good conduct we regard as part of the conditions under which morality is effected, and the endurance of them is included in moral duty. Being inevitable under the circumstances, they are part and parcel of moral facts. Just as a sweet poison may give a local pleasure, but be destructive on the whole,[1] so some acts which are painful in certain respects are beneficial on the whole. We do not consider these pains as good, but we accept them with fortitude: we cannot help feeling them, but we do not allow them to affect our action. At the same time, being pains, and *prima facie* unsuitable to our natures, we endure them only so long as they are inevitable, and we are always seeking to remove them. No one thinks it a good thing that by reason of the economic circumstances of society a man should have to show the courage of enduring hunger without complaining. But while pain is always a stimulus to us to remove it, we do not imagine that we shall ever remove pain altogether; we only alter the incidence of suffering:

[1] Cp. Lotze, *Med. Psych.*, pp. 237–9, quoted by Bradley, *Mind*, xiii. p. 3.

we might conceivably abolish material sufferings, but experience shows that in the process we create opportunities of more refined pains; and we do not contemplate a condition in which pains shall not be incidental to goodness. There is, however, one popular conclusion to be guarded against: in declaring pains, whether active or passive, to be conditions of right conduct, I do not assert that pains are created for the sake of goodness, or for the discipline of character. This may or may not be true: but the interpretation rests upon a metaphysical conception of a divine purpose which cannot be considered here, where I am only concerned with describing the facts of the moral life.

37. Morality is therefore of itself and necessarily a kind of optimism. It recognises to the full the existence of pain, but it treats pains as part of the given conditions which it has to turn to the best account, and it builds upon these suggestions a fabric of conduct and character which implies not the absence of pain, but the creation of ethical pleasures. But this is of course not the issue which is raised by pessimistic theories.[1] The natural optimism of morality is recognised by von Hartmann under the name of ethical optimism. Morality, he admits, establishes the life which is relatively the most endurable. Only he reverses the order of optimism and pessimism. In the common view pain is given, morality turns it to the best use: in pessimism pain is the leading idea, morality with its temporary optimism is only a means to getting rid of pain. The real issue raised is that because of the excess of misery over pleasure not to exist at all is better than to exist. And accordingly the ultimate outcome of history is the final annihilation of all existence by a collective act to be carried into effect by mankind or some

[1] In speaking of these, I shall refer to the doctrine of von Hartmann, which differs in many important points from that of his master Schopenhauer, always to the advantage of von Hartmann. The difficulties of Schopenhauer's theory do not fall to us to discuss, they lie mainly in his individualism, and in the absence from his conception of the idea of development. Von Hartmann's own pages supply the best criticism.

higher beings when they have become completely convinced of the misery of existence, and when at the same time their self-destruction will carry with it the destruction of everything.

It will be seen from this meagre sketch that the moral interest of pessimism lies not so much in its being a theory of morality as in its assigning the function of morality in the plan of the world. Pessimism in its best form does not supply a new rule of life different from that of ordinary morality.[1] On the contrary, it enjoins devotion to morality as helping in the grand final aim of all life. A pessimist who followed von Hartmann would bear his part bravely like other men. Perhaps it is not unnecessary to protest against the vulgar misconception that pessimism would recommend at this moment a universal suicide if only men would agree to commit the act together. Such a course would be ineffectual, because it would leave Nature still existing, and give another chance to the Unconscious of beginning again the weary round of misery.[2] The pessimist merely sees morality in a different light as part of a process leading to a final consummation. Its function is represented by von Hartmann thus. Finding every other conception impossible, he assumes the unhappiness of God before he entered into the process which is called the process of the world. That process is directed towards assuaging his unhappiness, and producing in him not indeed pleasure, but peace and repose. The basis of morality, or that part of the process in which conscious beings take part, is therefore a compassion for God, or rather an "absolute practical solidarity with the Absolute."[3] Morality involves not merely that we identify ourselves with God as the single Being: that is a lower form of the principle of morality.

[1] Schopenhauer proposes a new end, that of askesis or self-mortification, but this is a purely individualistic conception—the individual seeks bliss for himself, and in reality commits suicide. (Cp. *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, vol. iii. p. 129, Eng. Transl.)

[2] *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, vol. iii. p. 129.

[3] Von Hartmann, *Phaenomenologie des sittlichen Bewusstseins*, p. 869.

In its highest form the principle is that of redemption. "The world process is the passion of the incarnate God, and at the same time the way to his redemption: morality is the co-operation of men in shortening God's journey of suffering and redemption."[1]

38. Into the metaphysical basis of the theory it is not my place to enter here. I have only to point out the fundamental assumption, which is that life is worth living only if it contain an excess of pleasure over pain. That pleasure or freedom from pain is the real criterion is most forcibly illustrated by the ultimate theory I have just quoted. The pessimist, as Mr. Spencer justly remarks, agrees with the hedonist in measuring the value of life by its pleasure. Consequently all the objections to determining the end by a mere calculation of pleasures and pains recur with equal force against pessimism.

If we attempt to determine whether life is more painful than pleasant, or the reverse, we attempt an impossible task. The answers will differ probably according to the temperament of the individual. Darwin, a happy nature, than whom, however, from the nature of his studies, no one could be more alive to the frightful cost of existence,[2] thought that the pleasure exceeded the pain.[3] Others, and von Hartmann is one of them, come to the opposite result. The estimate is impossible to make, because we cannot (as yet) combine pleasures and pains into an aggregate and compare them. In doing so we regard them as differing only in intensity, and we neglect their preferability or their difference in kind. Pleasures and pains always have a determinate value (differing of course with every organism), according to the activities of which they are an element. Von Hartmann endeavours to establish his result by a long induction from all the sources of pleasure. But the plausibility of the conclusion depends on detaching the

[1] *Phaenomenologie des sittlichen Bewusstseins*, p. 871.
[2] *Life and Letters*, vol. ii. p. 312. [3] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 310–11.

pleasures and pains from their real conditions, and regarding them as simply such and such intensities of feeling. If we put the question thus, we make pleasures and pains real existences apart from the characters of the individuals which are to feel them, and the answers we get may be perfectly fanciful. Thus it is quite possible that the satisfaction of eating may be much less intense than the pain of hunger. But we cannot consider that it would be happier to have neither the hunger nor the satisfaction, for we should then be assuming that the satisfaction was not worth having even at the price of the hunger. If the value of pleasures and pains depends on their preferability, or the reverse, we must not compare them without these elements. To take another class of cases, it is asked, supposing we had not the instinct to exercise a talent, could we doubt but that the pleasure of its exercise would not compensate for the disappointments and chagrin that attend the artist's life? To answer no is to pervert the facts, because the pleasure depends upon the instinct to exercise the talent.[1] Partly, too, in attaining the apparent result that life is on the whole miserable, the inquiry commits the mistake of proving its case in detail, and assuming it therefore to be true in the sum. Thus there will be many cases where pleasures are greatly outweighed by pains, but taken in connection with the rest of life the pains may sink in value, and this as a matter of fact is what happens; and in thus combining pleasures and pains into a sum, it is forgotten how new pleasures are developed out of the attempt at adjustment of the various pleasures and pains of life.

If then we are unable to compare the pleasures and pains of life and declare that the misery outweighs the happiness, we could hold that a state of non-existence would be desirable only if a race were developed whose

[1] See another illustration quoted with approval from Schopenhauer by von Hartmann (*Philosophy of the Unconscious*, vol. iii. p. 47).

sentiments were so disposed. But supposing there were any evidence for a movement in this direction,[1] the ultimate goal of extinction would depend upon the growth of such sentiments, not upon any supposed excess of pain over pleasure. Meantime we can only insist that the view of pessimism is not that of human history, which does not aim at ultimate extinction, but uses the ever-present and recrudescent sources of misery as the occasion of fresh efforts to mitigate it, to transmute it by the creation of a character for which pains acquire a subordinate value. The real force of pessimism lies, I must believe, in its emphasis of the avoidable misery of the world: and the hold it has taken of men's minds depends on its appealing to an increased range of sympathetic compassionateness for pain.

39. Let us compare again the view adopted here, which is, I believe, that of the ordinary man, with the view of pessimism. The hackneyed question, Is life worth living? involves two—(1.) Is any life actually preferable to the person who lives it? (2.) Can any life be said to have a real value? Or, in technical language—(1.) Is any life subjectively preferable? (2.) Is there any objectively preferable life? The first question pessimism answers with a negative. Life is indeed actually lived, but it is not preferable, because it is more full of pain than of pleasure. It is chosen because of the instinct to life which is the working of the Unconscious—" the Thee in Me which works behind the veil" and bears the burden of the inexplicability of things. But the preferability of life in itself is an illusion. On the other hand, denying that the preferability of life depends merely on an excess in intensity of pleasure over pain, as if pleasures and pains differed only in intensity, and had not also different worth according to the character of the

[1] The mere destruction of life in the future by our being "frozen or fried" would not be the *voluntary* annihilation contemplated by pessimism, nor would it even be the annihilation of existence at all. Life might begin in another planet.

creature, we hold that the preferableness of existence is proved by the fact of existence. We cannot exclude the promptings of the creature's nature, for these are the essential elements of the result. It is true, moreover, that only certain kinds of life are preferable, only under certain conditions can life be chosen, but these are also the conditions without which it cannot be maintained. The very meaning of the principle of selection is to make the life which is worth living and that which can be lived identical.

Reasoning from its answer to the first question pessimism logically answers the second by denying that there can be any real value except in extinction. No actual life being desirable in itself, because of the excess of pain, the final end is the annihilation of all existence. To the ordinary view, having decided that the fact of existence is a proof of its preferability, the question whether existence has a real value means *what* existence has a real value. We have not to contrast existence with non-existence, but one kind of existence with another. And here again facts supply the answer. In the animal world the really preferable existence (to use terms which in strictness are inappropriate where choice is out of the question) is determined, in the case of each species, by the extinction of its competitors and its own survival. We cannot as yet say whether the same process is not repeated in human existence; but we can assert that unless morality is the standard by which the objective value of existence is measured, there is no other standard whatever. The contrast between the really valuable [1] life and that which has only an illusory value is the contrast of the good and the bad life. Understanding goodness, in the extended sense we have given to it, as including all the activities of character, goodness is related to other kinds of existence as truth to falsehood.

[1] This is true even if we hold that any stage of morality is only relative to some absolute stage, a position to be examined later.

III.—Vitality.

40. More than once I have had occasion to note how, in the history of ethics, the idea of life or vitality has displaced that of pleasure. It remains, then, to determine the place of vitality in the end. Reverting to a form under which the order of good conduct, so far verified to be the end, was presented, we found it to be an adjustment of the parts of conduct to one another, implying an equilibrium both in the individual and in society. Every duty is the proper performance of a function in the organism. The most natural way to describe this state of things is to say that each person has to do efficiently what is required of him for the work of the society as a whole. But because of the equilibration of the elements in the society or the individual we may properly hold that the end of morality is the health or vitality of the society, the individual's vitality being always regulated by the condition that it is to be compatible with the vitality of the whole. It would seem there was nothing more to do than to note the extended use of the conception of vitality and to pass on. This, however, we cannot do, because the idea of vitality is perplexed with difficulties which raise questions of importance.

Vitality is in strictness the energy to live, and it has therefore two different aspects. It is the force which keeps a creature alive, or it is the force which keeps it well. These two conceptions seem to be interchanged when the end is described as vitality,—the one that of the healthy condition of the organism, the other that of the continuation or preservation of life. It is in this latter form that the moral end falls into line with the rest of development as ordinarily conceived in the theory of evolution. Good conduct helps a society to maintain its existence, and it is a common and instructive method to exhibit the virtues as they contribute to this

end. We have then the two questions, first, how far can the end be described as a preservation of life or the continuance of existence? and secondly, the question, under what reservations is the end of morality identical with health? The idea of preserving life is the more prominent, and it even sheds an influence on that of health, for the impression is often left that vitality is nothing more than the physical or bodily life, which is that life which stands nearest to mere existence.

41. There is one sense in which continued existence is really the end, namely, when it is understood merely as keeping up the vital functions without any further implications. So understood, it merely takes the end in its lowest aspect, or in its least and poorest signification; and it is an insufficient description, for though every creature aims at maintaining its existence, we cannot describe the end as existence unless we add what sort of existence we intend. Existence, in fact, is an abstraction to which nothing corresponds in experience: nothing exists except upon certain terms. Given the type, the end of a creature is to continue the existence of that type, but continuance of existence is nothing more nor less than the performance of those functions which constitute the type of life in question: it is not separable from those functions as something which they subserve. If, then, the functions of an animal or of man are said to be determined by the need of maintaining his existence in this merely formal sense, it must be answered that his existence is nothing but the functions which it is said to determine. Just as in a former connection vitality was declared actually to consist in the acts which are said to conduce towards it,[1] so continued existence is nothing over and above the energies of life, but is these energies. Obvious as this truth is when put into words, and plainly as the mere formal idea of continued existence is nothing but one aspect of life, and not a further end, we must advert to

[1] Above, Bk. I., ch. iii., p. 59.

certain facts which seem to suggest another conclusion. Courage is a function which seems specially intended to defend the rest of life against intrusion. But life depends on contact with foreign influences and reaction upon them, on assimilating certain parts of the surroundings (say foods) and rejecting others. Courage, therefore, is not in itself a means to life, but an integral part of it: it is the performance of function as exhibited in repelling unsuitable elements. Courage is therefore no more in a special sense an action which maintains life than temperance. Life consists, among other acts, of those of eating and drinking and resistance, and an existence into which courage did not enter would be an existence of a different order. Accordingly, when it is shown that courage, chastity, and veracity are necessary to the existence of society, we merely imply that there is a kind of existence in which the conduct represented by those virtues is a constituent element.

42. In this formal signification of continued existence as the repetition of vital functions in their order, it is true, though only secondarily true, that the end is to preserve life. But the doctrine of evolution, though it always takes advantage of this formal sense, implies much more. Sometimes indeed the conception of the end as preservation of life, as "being with the promise of future being," has been thought to stand in contrast with and to be insufficient for the specially moral idea of life as desirable.[1] But this old Aristotelian antithesis of mere life and good life is not here to the point. For the good life, or the really or objectively desirable life, it is maintained by the doctrine of evolution, is that life which is able to maintain itself.

Dismissing this objection, what we have to note is that the theory of evolution means by preservation of life the victorious continuance of life, the assertion of life against its enemies. Now this is not a formal

[1] Mr. Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 245.

conception, but then it is not a true representation of the end. Granting for a moment (what I shall hereafter verify) that human society follows the same law as natural species, the meaning of the generalisation called the struggle for existence is not, as I understand, that the end of each creature is to overpower its rivals, but simply that each creature establishes its existence by such a victory. The end of the animal is to live according to its type: its type is selected by exterminating its rivals. The end of the dog is to do what a dog should do: that opportunity is secured by the dog by its victory over other animals. We cannot conclude that because the canine type is victorious, the end of the dog is to maintain its victorious existence: nor that because the moral society (let us assume) prevails, that its end is simply to maintain its prevalence. To do so is to confuse the causal order with the order of our discovery. We know that the moral society is the fittest because it proves its fitness by survival. But its survival, though it is the reason of our knowledge of its fitness, is not the cause of its fitness, but is in fact caused by the qualities which make the society moral. If we hold that the end of every species is to maintain its existence in the important sense of successful existence, we are committing a mistake, reading into the end of each species a theory of how the species comes into being. An illustration will explain. The end of the conservative party in the state is to govern by conservative principles, the end of the liberal party by liberal principles. Either party comes into power by defeating its rival, and in effecting its ideas maintains its victory. But the mere victory is not the true end of either party: it is only the proof that the end of the party is gained. Similarly the end of any kind of life is different from the struggle for life, and victory in the struggle, by which that end is accomplished. 'To preserve life' in the signification without which the theory that the moral end is

to preserve the social life would be pointless, is a positively false interpretation of the end, the result of a confusion of an effect with a cause, of a reason for our knowing with a reason of existence.

At the same time this condemnation is quite consistent with admitting that the ultimate tendency of evolution is to produce greater duration of life, a form in which the end of conduct is sometimes stated.[1] This is altogether different from the proposition that the end is to continue life, and is an attempt to combine the stages of growth into a single formula. Length of life is different from the continuance of life: it is part of the character of the species, and implies its greater complexity, which requires a greater length of time for complete exercise. How far it is valuable as a law of progress I have not to inquire. But, even supposing it to be a real law, on the other hand, it is not true that the end of life is to maintain its existence in the sense of aiming at victory, and the plausibility of the assertion depends on the tacit reference to the merely secondary truth that all life implies its maintenance.

43. Vitality, then, as the continuance of existence, either substitutes for a description of the end a theory of the genesis of morality, or else it states a merely formal element in the end. Vitality as health is a more fruitful conception: for health means that very fact of equilibrium which constitutes good conduct good. A healthy body is one whose organs are in adjustment one with the other, a healthy mind is one whose thoughts and feelings are never disproportioned. Vitality, then, instead of a bare idea of continued life, expresses a real and important feature of the end, and it has the advantage that it connects good life in man with efficient life throughout the animal creation. And instead of victorious existence it assigns the cause why existence is victorious.

[1] Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, pp. 10–14. Cp. p. 14, "that increased duration of life which constitutes the supreme end."

Morality, then, is a healthy type of human life, that type being actually existent in the form of a society. At the same time, it must be observed that health is not a further specification or a limitation of continued life, but is co-extensive with it. This is so amongst the animals, where only the healthy organism can maintain its existence. Of course, all varieties of health are possible, from the full and robust to the weak and imperfect, varieties which correspond to the different kinds of perfection in the moral order. But the diseased organism does not belong to its type at all, and it tends to disappear. Whether these phenomena are all reproduced in morality, whether a diseased morality means disappearance, and in what sense, we are not yet able to say: but at any rate we can see that corruption of morals means exclusion from the moral type. Health, therefore, and the continued existence of a type coincide in fact, but it is only the former which can serviceably be used as a criterion of the end.

44. Health, however, as applied to morals is only a metaphor derived from the physical health, and it is only in so far as it means equilibrium that it is applicable at all. Once more, therefore, we come back to the idea of equilibrium as fundamental. The health of society and of each instance of the type include, it is obvious, though not unnecessary to repeat, more than the mere physical health. Human vitality covers a wider order of functions, in which are included not merely animal activities, but others at a higher level; such as those we call distinctively moral, and the speculative or artistic or religious energies. These are all refinements in delicacy and complexity, on the simpler and more primitive functions, and they all depend on the lower activities. But their presence lowers the merely vital activities to the position of contributory elements to a larger whole, to be regulated in their exercise by all the rest. Some of the vigour of the vital energies may have to be sacrificed for the attain-

ment of the end in this more complicated organisation. If it is pernicious to neglect the physical health, it is idle to subordinate morality to mere health. On the contrary, we may pay too high a price for mere health. A very high physical vigour may, for instance, impede intellectual work. A man may, like Achilles, knowingly and rightly prefer to accomplish a great result though he shortens his life. In the moral organism the maintenance of mere vitality rests upon the same ground as the exercise of the ideal functions of benevolence or imagination. It is one part of the whole order of functions, and it has its value as entering into that human existence which is comprehended under the conception of dignity. Writers who work with the conceptions of animal life are apt to omit from morality the more ideal functions of science and art because they do not obviously tend to vitality, though they do maintain that higher vitality of which physical existence is only the lower stage.

45. With this proviso, vitality as health is simply another name for that character of good conduct which wins it the title of good. To describe the end of morality completely we need only to add some qualification which shall indicate the order of existence with which we are dealing. Health, like existence, is an algebraic formula in which we must substitute for the symbols the conditions of actual organisms. The vitality with which we are dealing here is moral, and this is equivalent to social vitality By the former adjective I need not now repeat that no peculiar or special fact is indicated. It only represents the nature of the functions which enter into the healthy human life. They are functions of character. They are not simply activities which are exercised, but conduct which is done with the consciousness of its meaning.[1] Each one of these functions, besides

[1] I make no pretence of having shown that the presence of consciousness in the sense defined carries sociality with it. Sociality as amongst bees may exist without the consciousness necessary to conduct: but that consciousness seems as a fact to imply sociality. The question of why

having a position in the whole, has also a value for the whole, and in this higher order of existence the performance of function is not merely a property of the whole nature of the organism, but appears besides under the aspect of a duty.

46. The result of this chapter is to confirm the hypothesis with which we started as to the nature of the end. It has been proved that the end of conduct is good conduct itself, defined as an equilibrium of conduct under the conditions of action, or, what is the same thing, the character of which that conduct is the expression. This end is both the standard and the object of human action. It is superior to all other ends because it includes them, while at the same time it contains the elements without which these other ends would be an insufficient definition. Neither pleasure nor perfection determines the end, except in so far as they are assumed to be such pleasures and perfections as the criterion of equilibrium requires. On the other hand, good conduct itself, besides implying this equilibrium, itself contains the ends of pleasure and perfection, the former in so far as it is willed conduct, the latter in so far as it is the finished product created out of certain materials. It agrees with the standard of vitality because vitality is the name for the equilibrium of organic life; but it expresses in addition what those elements are whose vitality constitutes the moral life.

The equilibrium of conduct is thus the comprehensive definition of the end. A Jewish doctor, Rabbi Jochanan ben Zacchai, "who received of Hillel and Shamai, once said to his five disciples," so the story runs, "'Go forth and consider which is the good path to which a man should adhere.' Rabbi Eliezer answered, 'A benevolent eye;' Rabbi Joshua said, 'A good associate;'

conscious beings must be social is, if answerable at all, a matter for metaphysics; but I have tried to show in chap. iv., sec. ii., 'Common Good,' what the significance of the connection is for ethics.

Rabbi Jose said, 'A good neighbour;' Rabbi Simeon said, 'One who weighs consequences;' Rabbi Elazer ben Arach said, 'A good heart.' He then said unto them, 'I see more in the words of Rabbi Elazer ben Arach than in yours, for his words include all yours.'" These very unequal answers curiously illustrate how the same varieties of temperament produce in different ages the same varieties of answers to the eternal questions of ethics. With the answers themselves, however, I am not concerned: nor with Rabbi Jochanan's judgment upon them. But the relation which he thought the answer of Rabbi Elazer bore to the other answers is the relation of the equilibrium of conduct to the other definitions of the end. We might suppose a professor in our days bidding his pupils write an essay on the subject of the moral end: one of them might say it was perfection or self-realisation, another that it was the greatest pleasure of the greatest number, another that it was social vitality, and another that it was the equilibrium of conduct. If the professor approved the investigations of the present chapter, he might say like Rabbi Jochanan, "Your answers are all true, but I see more in the words of the last of you than in those of the rest: for his words include all yours."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONTENTS OF THE END.

I.—Virtue and Duty.

1. The business of the moralist in discussing the end would be a comparatively simple one if he had only to discover the various elements contained in its idea. I have endeavoured to exhibit in the preceding chapters the aspects under which the end appears, and to show how these are all comprehended under the complete expression of the order of good conduct. All such inquiries are necessarily of a more abstract character, and they are preliminary to the laborious work of describing what the actual contents of the end are. This is the department of applied ethics. It lies, however, outside of my scheme to describe what morality is in detail, though a complete science of ethics would require such a description. Following the general plan of this work, I propose only to consider the main conceptions which meet us when we ask upon what principle the contents of the end should be classified for scientific purposes. The end which is a system of good conduct may be described with propriety as a system of virtues or of duties, or using a third idea, of moral institutions, and morality may be classified upon any of these principles. Thus it is customary in English ethics (as in the best philosophies of Greece) to present morality under the headings of the various virtues. With others again (as for example Kant) the leading idea is that of duties. On the other hand, many German writers, instead of enumerating and describing the virtues, have

simply described moral institutions in their systematic connection. Hegel's Philosophy of Law is an important instance.[1] By moral institutions, to define the phrase by examples, I mean such relations of life as the family, or friendship, or the labour of the artisan, or the relation of prince and subject in the state. These three ideas, virtue, duty, moral institutions, describe in fact the same things from different points of view. Moral relations, to speak summarily, are institutions when we think of how they are built upon the various human impulses, as the family is on the sexual impulse: they are duties so far as they are binding on the individuals who enter into the relations: they imply virtues as the qualities of the agent's mind. This is, however, only a summary statement, and we have to inquire more minutely into the connection between the three ideas. The chief difficulty lies in the relation of virtue and duty to each other, a question which I will consider first.

2. Of the two, virtue and duty, the former would seem to have a prior claim to be the principle of classification, because it seems to cover a wider area than duty. The two ideas are indeed commonly used in antagonism. Virtue, it is said, includes duty, but contains something more, and we point the contrast sometimes by the phrase strict or bare duty which seems to limit duty to a minimum. At the same time, the antagonism of the two ideas is not complete. There is no doubt that if there is a duty, it is not only obligatory but virtuous to do it. The distinctive mark of virtue seems to lie in what is beyond duty: yet every such act must depend on the peculiar circumstances under which it is done, of which we leave the agent to be the judge, and we certainly think it his duty to do what is best.

[1] This plan is not confined to Hegel and his followers. The greater part of Lotze's *Outlines of Practical Philosophy* is taken up with a description of social institutions. The *Allgemeine Ethik* of Prof. Steinthal, a Herbartian, exhibits the moral life as realising the great normative ideas of morals. Prof. Wundt's *Ethik* proceeds similarly.

The relation of virtue and duty is complicated, but it will be found, I believe, that when we are considering the moral value of conduct (a proviso to be explained later) virtue and duty are co-extensive, the former describing conduct by the quality of the agent's mind, the latter by the nature of the act performed. At the same time, though every virtue is a duty, and every duty a virtue, there are certain actions to which it is more natural to apply the term virtuous. Duty is an idea which has not only moral but also legal associations, and it is mainly coloured by the latter. Now there are certain important characteristics of legal conduct. In the first place (1) it is compulsory, and hence we do not naturally speak of duty in respect of acts, like eating, &c., to which the inducement is obvious, and from which the difficulty would be to get people to abstain. But this need not delay us, because we do not naturally speak of these as virtues either. The characteristics of legal conduct which concern us here are (2) that it is definite and precise; (3) that it fixes not so much the superior as the inferior limit of possible right actions: it furnishes a standard below which people are likely to go, and below which they must not go: but it offers no guide for individual dispositions which may go beyond the law. In Grote's words, "it takes cognisance not of any risings above it, but only of fallings below it."[1] These two characteristics coincide, for the conduct which can be fixed definitely and precisely is that which can be required of the average man. Accordingly we should expect the other idea of virtue in contrast to duty to be applied most naturally in cases where the circumstances are indefinite, and a margin is left for the individual's judgment, and where the act exceeds the average standard.

3. A few examples will verify these results.[2] There

[1] John Grote, *Treatise on the Moral Ideals*, ch. vii., p. 85.

[2] In this section I have found Mr. Sidgwick's chapter on 'Virtue and Duty' helpful (*Methods of Ethics*, Bk. III., ch. ii.).

is a general duty to give charity, and of a particular class of people we can lay down the minimum which is obligatory. But the amount to be given is indefinite, because of the variety in different persons' positions, or the claims made upon them for other purposes. Hence any one who gives considerably more than the minimum we call virtuous. Still we do not imply that his act stands on a different footing from an act of duty. Supposing we knew his circumstances, we should feel that in his place we should do the same, and we know, moreover, that he himself regards his action in the light of a duty. We regard his action as right, but we have a warmer feeling for it than mere approval, a feeling of admiration which is based partly on the merit of the action, its actual largeness, partly on the contrast we make between what this man has done, and what many would do in his place. There is a similar difference in our mode of regarding the omission of such virtuous acts. Violations of a definite duty we condemn, but if a man fails of a high degree of liberality, then we simply withhold approval, because we do not know how far other claims permit the liberality. If we knew his circumstances, then, though we should not perhaps pronounce condemnation, we should do what is equivalent, we should think the worse of him.

Again there is a general duty to save a life which is in danger, but if I plunge into the sea to save a drowning man, I am not simply praised for doing my duty, but admired for virtue. Bravery here seems more than duty. However, the case is really like the last: the limits within which a man should risk his life depend partly on his own skill and physical qualifications, partly on how far he is free from obligations to family or country. If I were known to be a strong swimmer and a man of naturally hardy temperament, I should perhaps be actually condemned for not risking my life. But just because such emergencies and such powers are not provided for in the average level of requirements, it seems

inappropriate and unnatural to call my act one of duty.

What is true of ordinary virtuous acts which go beyond strict duty is true also of acts for which even the mere name of virtue seems so insufficient that we call them noble or heroic. To the agents themselves they appear as acts of duty, and they are properly judged by us to stand on the same moral level as all other good acts, to be binding on the persons who do them. Moreover, not to have done them would be felt by those persons to be as keen a reproach as to have failed in an obvious duty, just as to a man of cultivated feelings the omission of a slight refinement may be as hateful as to break a contract. The hero himself is aware of his own responsibility to himself. The spectator cannot, however, apply to him such a 'juridical' conception, because it is only the agent himself who is in a position to judge.

4. Virtuous conduct, then, it might seem, is distinguished from dutiful conduct by superiority of merit, and it is true that the meritorious and the virtuous partly coincide. But the coincidence is only partial: it exists only so far as what I may call positive merit is concerned: that which depends on some superiority of gifts, as in the case of the hero or of the good rich man. On the other hand, negative merit, where a man is good in spite of some great disadvantage, does not make an act virtuous as contrasted with dutiful conduct. If a man has a strong passion, say for drink, it is still his duty to repress it; and though we may attribute merit to him, and may even call him a virtuous man, yet by that epithet we do not imply that he has done more than his duty, as we do suggest when Ham Peggotty, in the story, plunges into the storm to save the shipwrecked man. Thus action may be meritorious where it is not natural to call it a duty, but it may be also meritorious where it is not natural to call it virtue. Merit, in fact, means a scale within the range of good acts themselves. When

we speak of either duty or virtue we are always thinking of them in contrast to the action which is rejected, crime or vice.

5. Virtue and duty, though differently applied, are thus in reality co-extensive, in the sense that there is nothing in a virtuous act which makes it different from an act of duty. It was stated above that this was true so long as we considered the moral value of actions. The proviso was added, because we have to distinguish two different classes of virtue, or if it is preferred, two senses of the word virtue, corresponding to the distinction of ethical and pathological. By the pathological virtues I mean certain gifts of emotion or sentiment which are sometimes thought to make action more virtuous, but do not alter its real character. Thus, for example, the virtue of benevolence may be thought imperfect without kindly feeling, though a man may be benevolent without any such spontaneous movement. Chastity, again, may in some natures be accompanied by, and flow from, a delicacy of feeling which makes all unlawful suggestions impossible. Now if these emotions were necessary to their respective virtues, we should have to admit that duty was less than virtue. But we must maintain that they are excellences which do not alter the moral character of conduct, and may be absent altogether, and leave the agent as virtuous as if they were present. Some persons, indeed, would say that there was less virtue in characters which possessed these emotional endowments. This would not be a true representation of the common view which holds that they make their possessor more lovable, but they do not make him better. In themselves they are not virtues in the ethical sense, but only "add a lustre" to habits of will. They may even be ineffectual, as often happens with very good-natured persons, or they may be positively bad. Courage, for instance, we admire even in a villain. We may conclude, then, that these excellences of disposition are only valuable in so far as they are helps to virtue,

and we praise the brave villain on account of a quality which is of the utmost importance for actual goodness. They enter into our ideal of the perfect or complete character, though if we estimate our ideal of perfection rightly, we shall find, I think, that we attach less value to them when they are native than when they have been produced by a constant discipline. Though Greek and Christian moral ideas differ in emphasising, the former repose, and the latter victory and struggle, their ideals of human nature are not really far apart: both are ideals of a reposeful or restful activity of the feelings based upon the principle of a controlling will.

II.—The Classification of Morality.

6. We can now see upon what terms virtue may be the principle of a classification of the contents of morality. So far from having a superior claim, virtue, in the proper sense, we find is nothing more than the mental quality which corresponds to certain duties, and it is defined by reference to these duties. An enumeration of virtues is thus a description of the moral life, where the virtues serve as heads under which certain duties may be grouped. Such an enumeration is possible, because for the most part we can find names of virtues corresponding to each kind of duty, and it is not difficult to classify large groups of observances under mere general virtues. Thus, for example, all duties may be comprehended under the single duty of doing right; and to this corresponds the single all-embracing virtue of which all others may be considered as special forms, which may be defined in Kant's words as "the strength of a man's maxim to pursue his duty."[1] The virtues of benevolence and justice embrace the two great groups of (1) social observances resting on sympathy, and (2) stricter conduct

[1] Kant's *Tugendlehre*, p. 241 (ed. Schubert).

defined by law. On the other hand, difficulties are offered which hint that the classification of virtues is defective. Many duties may be classed arbitrarily under names of different virtues. Filial virtue corresponds to the relation of son to father. We may call it gratitude, but the applicability of the name may well be questioned; or we may class it under the general head of benevolence, but it seems incongruous to group such duties along with those of social intercourse. The only accurate name of the virtue is filial virtue, and we seem referred at once to the family relation itself as determining the position of the virtue in the scheme of morality. Or again, there is a duty to record one's vote in a political contest. What virtue corresponds to this, except the virtue of the citizen as member of a political body?—the accurate description again referring to the institution which the virtue maintains.

7. Putting these difficulties aside, we may classify morality under virtues as heads of duties. But there is a danger of confusion to which this principle is liable, and which it rarely avoids. Virtues are qualities of conduct, but we may rank along with virtues which stand for duties qualities of conduct which do not correspond to duties in the same sense. Thus in an enumeration which purports to be a list of heads of duties, we find wisdom and self-control as two of the series. But these are plainly not virtues in the same sense as justice or benevolence. Justice corresponds to just acts: but there is no special group of acts which we can call wise. Wisdom is a virtue not as corresponding to any observances, but as a necessary quality of mind in all action. The enumeration mixes up in fact two classifications, in the one of which we group observances together under certain heads, in the other of which we enumerate certain elements of good action in general, certain aspects which every good action presents, and we exhibit them as qualities in the agent's mind.

8. These two classifications are combined in the ancient description of morality under the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. As a classification of duties it is a mere rough scheme, which serves its purpose only because justice is used to include everything not accounted for by the rest. But the real value of the scheme does not lie here, but in its describing certain elements which are present in all acts: and early as the generalisation is, it is made with an instinctive apprehension of the most important aspects of conduct. Wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice may be better rendered by the names of moral insight, courage, self-control, and justice. The place of wisdom is easily explained,—every moral act demands insight into the conditions of action, the seeing what it is right to do, and the ability to penetrate into the means required for the end. Self-control is the aspect which good action presents in so far as it implies the subjugation of contrary inclinations. To explain the significance of courage and justice, let us refer back to the analysis of good conduct. All good conduct involves a certain distribution of parts amongst the various members of society (or amongst the various powers of the individual's mind). It is this right distribution of action, which belongs to goodness as such, that is represented under the name of justice; and it was therefore with a true instinct that justice was sometimes regarded as including all virtue. But this proper distribution implies exclusiveness in each member: every good act has to maintain its position and defend itself as it were against all comers. Courage is this defence of the right act because it is right. It is the determination to do right against all odds, and is the self-assertiveness of goodness. On account of this function it combines two things which may seem at first sight incompatible. As resisting an attack it is the persistence or resolution of the good man, his strength to do right in defiance of everything, and is felt as

indignation or resentment excited by an assault upon what belongs to him as his own. But also being not mere resistance, but the defence of right because it is right, it involves a sense of dependence on a superior order, so that the greatest and most heroic acts which depend upon a high degree of self-contained strength are done with humility and trust in that which is the highest ideal to the agent's mind, "God defend the right." It is these four important aspects of good conduct which are represented by the cardinal virtues, and perhaps if benevolence, or the sympathy which is the complement of the exclusiveness of good action, were added, we should have a complete account of morality from this point of view. These virtues come to be used as representing the system of duties because they are most prominently emphasised in certain groups of duties: self-control in temperance, courage in the soldier, justice in obedience to the law, wisdom in the duties of the administrator.

9. It is interesting to notice the treatment of the virtues as presented by the two greatest ethical writers of Greece. Plato adopts from common opinion the division into four cardinal virtues: but he combines the two different points of view which correspond to the two systems of classification I have described. When he is speaking of the individual's mind he is really enumerating the qualities of moral action as such: he represents (under the peculiar forms of his psychology) the philosophic significance of the four virtues: the account which has been given above of courage is based upon his description of how the so-called spirited element in the soul operates, the self-assertiveness of right conduct. His virtue of courage includes as plainly as could be desired what we call moral courage, which he holds more important than the mere facing of death. But at the same time he regards these aspects of good conduct as corresponding to the main functions of men in the state. Courage corresponds to the duties of the soldier, and so

forth. The one classification is equated to the other. With Aristotle, on the other hand, the four cardinal virtues lose their importance. Wisdom or insight (*φρόνησις*) is rightly represented not as a separate virtue, but as indispensable to all good conduct alike. The virtues proper appear in their order as representing certain moral observances, and as he has abandoned the confusion between the aspects of morality and the actual contents of morality, his whole aim is to enumerate the virtues in certain specific and precisely defined forms.

10. Returning from this digression, and assuming that we can cover the whole ground of morality in a scheme of virtues and duties, let us come to the question at issue, upon what principle we must naturally proceed in the classification. The condition of a good classification is that it should be systematic, and not a mere enumeration: it should follow the natural connections of things. Now any grouping together of morality under certain virtues or heads of duties is apt to break across the lines. We have already observed cases of difficulty where duties which are only remotely connected seem to be brought under one head, as the filial duty under the head of gratitude, and this again under benevolence. Apart from this artificiality, a more serious danger lies in bringing under different headings duties which are attached to the same institution. This is notably the case with the great groups of benevolence and justice. Justice is not entirely exhausted by legal relations, though a large part of its contents consists of these. But in every institution there will be both legal and non-legal duties. Thus to respect my neighbour's right to lights is a legal duty, and it would seem absurd to call it a duty of neighbourliness: on the other hand, there are proper neighbourly duties, such as visiting, where that is practised, which would belong to benevolence. Thus benevolence and justice will in certain cases divide the same institution into two strata.

11. On the other hand, we have in moral institutions the moral life already mapped out for us into its different parts. Moral institutions are the mode in which morality gives effect to the various wants of mankind. We have not to trace how these institutions are generated, a task which belongs to a different science: but taking them as we find them, we see that they are all of them based upon human wants. In describing the moral life as we find it in any society, we are therefore sure to avoid artificiality. We do not bring together observances in virtue of analogy or some link of identity, as plant species are grouped in the Linnæan system, but we take them as they arise in their turn in the growing complexity of social requirements. Such a description will present the virtues and duties grouped together as they naturally should be according to their origin. For we observe that the virtues and duties naturally attach to the institutions, and are defined by them. All these ideas represent the same facts, but the two former are scientifically secondary. Duties are the conduct and virtues the quality of mind by which institutions are maintained. Accordingly, if we wish to know what a virtue is, we ask to what institution it belongs. Chastity is the virtue of abstaining from unlawful relations, but this is only a negative form of the positive truth that it is the virtue which takes effect in the institution of marriage. The duty of recording a vote (to take a former instance) gives effect to the institution of parliamentary franchise. Honesty is a virtue of the institution of commercial exchange. In the next book I shall point out how the use of the name of the virtue to describe observances conceals from us the changes that take place in the institution, the name of the virtue remaining unaltered. I may add that as the virtues and duties group themselves round institutions, so the description of the institutions introduces by contrast the vices which break them down.

We shall thus have an analysis of the contents of

morality, to which the following words of Hegel, in description of a true theory of duties, will apply. "It is the systematic development of the cycle of moral necessity. Such an exposition will differ in form from a theory of duty merely in this, that it describes the moral law as necessary relations, and is content with having given this description, without adding that therefore this law is a duty."[1] The only phrase in the above to which we need demur is the phrase "necessary relations," which does not imply, but is apt to suggest the unalterable fixity of moral institutions.[2] The system of moral institutions will in fact be only those approved institutions of life which we find in any one age. For each age, if I may anticipate, the contents of morality are different.

III.—Moral Institutions.

12. In order to explain more fully the nature of such a system of moral institutions, it will be best to attempt a slight sketch of its main outlines, the chief groups under which the parts will fall. What is offered here is nothing but the barest sketch. Anything further would be useless unless it were worked out with a completeness of detail which is beyond the scope of this work. What details are given are designed as illustrations, and the order in which they are stated is not necessarily that which they would have in a reasoned and careful exposition. In making groups within morality it is to be premised that in every institution two things are involved. One is its social character, by which it forms a tie between man and man: the other is its personal character, its contribution to the ideal of individual dignity which each good man represents. With this understanding we can rightly separate institutions according as they affect one or a

[1] Hegel, *Phil. des Rechts*, § 148.

[2] Lotze, *Outlines of Practical Philosophy*, § 27, has some valuable remarks on this point.

few or a larger range of persons, and the increasing complexity of the institution will partly coincide with the extension of the range of persons affected.

(*a.*) The first section of the scheme will be the individual, considered by himself as a living person whose life has a moral value from the part which it plays in society. In these relations the individual stands next to mere natural existence. Life and health are the aspects of this individual existence. The corresponding duties are those which are commonly called the self-regarding duties, those of maintaining himself first of all in healthy life, and secondly in freedom from the aggression of others. The virtue of prudence is concerned partly with these duties, and under the same head will come temperance, which is the just satisfaction of the bodily appetites. It is hardly necessary to name the contrasted vices and crimes. Murder, for instance, would be the crime which violated the moral right of the individual to physical existence.

(*b.*) The next stage of complexity is the direct entrance of man into relation with others, as contrasted with the indirect relations to others involved in the moral approbation of, *e.g.*, temperance. The simplest institution which results is that of marriage and the family. Ethics would have to describe the various relations implied in this union of persons into a common life—the relation of husband and wife, of parents to children, of the children to one another, the regulation of the house as the family home; and it would explain the duties which these relations involve, or in other words, the conditions under which good family life is possible. Here would come the nature of the marriage tie, whether monogamous or not, and the conditions upon which the marriage may be dissolved.[1] The institution of marriage, by defining the

[1] On the family, see especially T. H. Green's chapter in his lectures on *Political Obligation* (Section O; *Works*, vol. ii.). Lotze's remarks on this subject are very valuable (*Outlines*, §§ 37–39). Lotze, however, puts the family under the head of the moral individual.

limits of intercourse between the sexes, is the foundation of the virtue of chastity as at present understood: in other ages than our own the virtue has not been held to exclude relations to persons outside the family.

13. (*c.*) From its importance I have given a separate place to the family, but it may be treated as forming the first great division of the institution of *society* properly so called. The term society, as such, does not imply a contrast with the moral individual, as if he were non-social: it is used to describe that union of free persons into a common life which is a lower union than the state, in so far as it is not organised as a government with the distinction of governor and subject. Labour is perhaps the simplest institution of society, the means by which the individual members supply one another with their wants. On labour is reared the great organisation of industry, with its division into employers and employed, and their corresponding duties. Directly or indirectly connected with labour is the institution of property, whether private or communal, with the privileges and obligations it carries. Out of the unequal division of the products of the earth arises the moral institution of charity. To exhaust all the forms of intercourse between the members of society would be an endless task. Besides such strict relations as those of contract, we have the indefinite social intercourse, which has its virtues in the courtesy of manners, and the more important virtue of veracity, of representing things as they are. Other institutions of society are the classes of life, each with its separate nuance of conduct and thinking, sometimes with a code of honour. Under this head come also the various forms of social combinations, as in churches for religion, in schools, trade unions, and the like.

(*d.*) The institutions of society are succeeded by those of the state, and the boundaries of the two are hard to define, for the limits of society grow or diminish according as a smaller or a larger number of social institutions fall

under the control of the state as such. In fact, the distinction of state and society may become in time obliterated altogether.

In the state, then, the individual is a member of new institutions. The most important is the constitution itself, with the various privileges and the duty to use them which belong to governor and governed, to citizen and representative. There are again the duties of administration, and those which flow from the organisation of justice. The judge has his duties, the citizen has his, which are not in this connection the obedience to the law, but the duty of availing himself of the machinery established for maintaining the law. But the state is not only a unity of national life, it is a defensive unity, and it requires an army and navy, with the duties they entail upon certain persons, to enforce the ideas which are comprised within the national life.

14. It is a matter of great difficulty to determine where we shall place the moral institutions of science and art. Partly, as with religion, the cultivation of them takes effect in institutions obviously social in character (and requiring obviously social duties), such as schools, universities, museums, libraries, though here it may be difficult to separate off the parts of society and of state. But the duty of the individual to truth or beauty as such, whether of perfecting himself in what has been already attained, or discovering and producing more, is not yet accounted for. Being a concern of the individual, it might seem to fall under the first division along with prudential institutions,[1] but the juxtaposition of the lowest and the most ideal functions seems hardly less incongruous than that of the oak and the ivy in the old botanical systems. If I may use the expression, it is the impersonal element in a person which is gratified by the attainment of truth and beauty. In reality these duties seem to stand at

[1] Prof. Wundt puts the "spiritual interests" under the head of the "individual personality."

the summit of the institutions of society. The duty to truth in knowledge is in fact an enlargement of the social duty of veracity, exhibited not in the mere normal interchange of ideas in language, but in the effort to represent things in thought as they really are in existence. Such an extension does not stand alone, for ordinary practical relations exhibit the same expansiveness; for instance, courtesy and kindness we extend to foreigners as well as to fellow-countrymen. Duties towards animals, again, whatever be their real nature, imply a highly idealised conception of man as such: only when mere humanity became recognised could we go beyond it and recognise the claims of the merely sentient creatures. We must trace also a similar extension in state institutions. The state is based upon society, and the comprehension of a wider and wider range of persons under a social institution (such as international commerce) is the basis of the moral relations of states to one another which are called the institutions of international law.

In dealing with the third and fourth of our divisions, we must, therefore, in the first place, include under the state duties of states to one another; and again, with regard to society, we must bear in mind that a social duty is not necessarily confined to the society of a particular nation, but may include all mankind. The duty to science and art will find its appropriate place at the close of such a scheme of social duties.

15. One remark may be added which is suggested by the survey of even this provisional and imperfect review of moral institutions. In speaking of the end we saw that morality was the supreme and comprehensive business of life which spread over all departments, and subjected them all to regulation under the will. This truth reappears in the evidence offered by the classification of morality of how the science of ethics draws within its limits all the minor sciences, so far as they deal with

human affairs. Thus the practical sciences deal with special departments of ethics, which is their master science. Politics deals with the institutions of the state, and supplies the materials for ethical duties in that department. Jurisprudence, again, deals with law, one of the halves of ethical institutions. Though law is not morality, and though ethics has not to investigate the nature of the law, but only to describe the legal relations it finds, yet the body of law forms a part of morality just as much as if it were unaccompanied by a legal sanction. On the other hand, the theoretical sciences bear a different relation, and their results are used for ethics only so far as they have a bearing upon practice. Thus when medicine discovers principles of house sanitation, the carrying of these into effect becomes a part of moral institutions: or again, the results of agricultural chemistry are utilised by the well-informed farmer in cultivating his land. In like manner, though ethics has nothing to do with mathematics, yet supposing the latter science points out a certain road to truth, ethics steps in with a special duty of planning that road. All sciences bring their tribute to the supreme human science, just as all powers of man's nature contribute their quota of material to the human end.

BOOK III.

DYNAMICAL—MORAL GROWTH AND PROGRESS.

CHAPTER I.

THE VARIATION OF THE MORAL IDEAL.

I.—The Problems.

1. The description of morality contained in the part of this work now concluded has been an essay in what may be called moral statics. The assumption upon which it proceeded has been already explained, viz., that the moral standard remains permanent. On this assumption we have analysed the criterion set up by the moral judgment and the various elements contained in the ideal. I have pointed out, at the same time, that this assumption is not arbitrary, but postulated by the moral judgment itself. The order or system of conduct described has been compared to a section taken across the path of morality at any one time or during any one age. Such a section will exhibit the characteristics in virtue of which morality receives its name, and the actual observances comprised under the moral law. But it gives no view of the process, though it supplies indications of it, by which the distinction of right and wrong in any age have come about, or of the shape to be taken by the moral law in the future. One of the commonest ways of expressing the conflict which arises in the history of conduct is to distinguish what is formally right from

what is really right though formally wrong. Moral statics is a theory of formal morality. It remains now to introduce the additional element of change and progressiveness which will make the formal description accord with actual experience. We have then in moral dynamics to solve two main problems. We have to show how the moral equilibrium is produced and the forces by which it is maintained; and secondly, to examine the meaning and the law of moral progress.

2. In making this inquiry it will be specially helpful to employ the analogy already drawn between a moral ideal and a natural species. The moral ideal as a system or order of conduct is simply the representation of morality as an organism. We have seen that the moral organism is a social order realised under appropriate modifications by each member of the order. The ideal may therefore be regarded as a species of which the various ideals, as they exist in the minds of good men, are the different individuals. As all the individuals of a species share in a common character, and present the specific character under differences of height, size, colour, and the like, so the different members of the society have their several ideals determined by their different functions in the whole. The analogy would be imperfect if we regarded different persons as merely instances of the species which is the whole society, though this is an intelligible expression. For the species in the animal world, except in the case of animals which live in societies, is not an organic collection of individuals, but is simply all the individuals called by the same name, or their common type of organisation. But the type in the case of man is, owing to his social character, itself an organism of which the individual is an organ. Hence, if we are to use the analogy at all, we must compare the relation of species to its individuals with that between the social ideal and the individual ideals. By thus personifying a moral ideal I do not, however, imply that the ideal has

in existence of its own: an ideal is nothing but a person in so far as he acts the ideal. The distinction in the case of man from the lower animals arises from what has so often been indicated before, his consciousness of the object of his action. The animal lives according to its plan: the man directs his action towards a plan, the parts of which are before his mind: and this consciousness is connected with the sociality of good conduct, implying, as that does, that the conduct is something which bears a character intelligible to other persons.

3. The moral ideal, or order of conduct, being therefore a species, we should expect to find the origin and growth of morality analogous to, or, to speak more strictly, identical with, the origin and growth of natural species. And this will be found to be the case. The course of morality will be found to represent the struggle between moral ideals, and the phenomena of the maintenance and growth of morality offer parallels to the history of natural forms. The analogy, however, is not so much a key to the interpretation of moral facts, as it is a result of an inquiry into these facts, conducted independently. It may indeed, as has been before remarked, be a question whether as much light may not be reflected on the natural problem by the ethical, as the reverse. And instructive as is the identity of the law, it is of greater importance to show how different is the appearance of moral history from that of animal history, in consequence of the fundamental superiority of man over the lower animals.

The order of the investigation will be as follows. I will begin by explaining the essential variation of the moral ideal, the continuous transmutation of morality from one specific form to another. Given this continuous variation, it will then be possible to show what the process is by which any one moral standard is produced, and what is the meaning of the institutions by which it is maintained. I can then return to consider the development of morality as a whole; to ask how far the

continuous change of ideals is identical with progress; and lastly, to inquire what the actual law is upon which the changes of morality proceed.

4. The progress of the ideal, which is to be now described, must be distinguished at the outset from another form under which moral progress presents itself, namely, as within the ideal itself. This second progress is the process by which each individual approximates to the highest development required by the actual standard. In exacting from each of its members a certain duty according to his position, the standard does not assume his position to be unalterable, but takes into account the gradual change from imperfect to perfect development. It is under this form that progress is most familiar to us, in the education of children or the reformation of bad men, and again in the natural development of the good man as he passes from youth to manhood and again declines into the more restricted functions of old age. But such progress is involved in the constitution of the ideal itself, and it will therefore be more fittingly described later, when we trace the actual growth of any given ideal. It is different from that change from ideal to ideal which makes the advance of morality in the proper sense. We may reserve it, therefore, under the name of individual progress,[1] in distinction from the universal or objective progress which arises not from the differences of development included under the standard, but from the very existence of the standard itself.

[1] It is described at length below in ch. iii. under the title 'Education' (pp. 342–352).

II.—GOOD AND BEST.

5. (*a.*) *The Ultimate Ideal.*—The last assertion, that progress is involved in the very existence of the moral ideal, has as much the appearance of a paradox, as to say that the moral ideal is in constant progress looks like a commonplace. Probably few would be found at the present day to maintain that the moral law is unprogressive, and has been eternally the same in the obvious sense of those words. It is a part of the creed of the evolutionist to regard moral conduct as in process of evolution from lower to higher, from less to more definite. Even intuitionism, the most difficult of all theories to reconcile with actual historical growth, is compelled to accept the development of moral ideas as a fact, while denying the incompatibility of the fact with its theory.[1] To the metaphysician, again, morality is a perpetual "effort after the better," [2] an effort which arises from the conflict with the imperfect reality of an ideal as yet unrealised and to be realised. But these admissions are far from the assertion that progress is bound up with the existence of morality. For it is possible to maintain that morality constantly advances, but yet that there is an ultimate ideal to which, though we may indeed never actually attain it, all our temporary standards are only approximations. If such an ideal is a valid conception, we contemplate a stage at which progress will cease altogether in complete fruition of the human end. Whether we call the temporary standard an ideal, or reserve this name for the ultimate end, is a question of words. I have all along, following what is, I believe, the customary usage, represented the ideal as the standard by which

[1] Cp. Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii. p. 379—"The conscience, as we have defined it, is so far from excluding historical development, that it presupposes and expounds it, so that the two doctrines are mutual complements."

[2] Green, *Prolegomena*, p. 180, § 172.

any particular age judges conduct. But it is not a question of words whether there is any such ultimate ideal at all. Now the belief in the existence of a perfect ideal is very commonly to be found along with the belief in progress, taking different forms in different views. It is as rare as possible to find a frank recognition of a perpetual impermanence in morality, except in the sense that the ultimate 'best' is never to be attained. The 'best' remains a *terminus ad quem*, always confronting the progressive growth of mankind, and in one shape or other forming the condition upon which that progress rests, and from which it derives its value.[1] Even writers who rightly persist in confining themselves to actual morality are reluctant to deny the possibility of a perfect society,[2] though they may make no use of the conception.

6. If such an ultimate ideal were admissible, it would be impossible to assert that morality is essentially progressive. But the antithesis of a 'best' and a 'good' appears to rest on a misinterpretation of moral progress. If the preceding account of morality is correct, every moral code represents an equilibrium of persons under their given conditions. There is, therefore, a kind of finality about the moral judgment, and no matter what the moral judgment is, it possesses the same finality. This finality is transferred from the standard to which it belongs, irrespective of the stage of development, and made the characteristic of an ultimate code. The position I wish to establish is that the good is always ultimate, but that owing to the development of human nature it is

Thus Green describes the course of morality as the "practical struggle after the Better, of which the idea of there being a Best has been the spring" (*Prolegomena*, p. 180, § 172). And in a later passage, "In our contemplation of them (*i.e.* the objects of our action) as truly good, the forecast of an indefinable Better is always present," the same idea is implied (p. 244, § 228).

[2] Thus Mr. Stephen, who has some excellent remarks (ch. i., § 29, pp. 37, 38) on the different meaning of ideals, seems to regard an ideal code as a valid conception, though he makes no use of it.

always in motion. There can therefore be no contrast of a 'good' and a 'best,' but only of a 'good' and a 'better.' Moral progress admits of only two degrees of comparison, the superlative being identical with the positive.

One objection I will meet at once before proceeding further. In postulating a 'best' we do not, it may be said, imply a greater rightness in the ultimate condition, but only a highest development. Granted that you may be equally good under any ideal, there is yet an ideal which represents man at his highest. We have here again the notion of perfection advanced as the moral end, and all the difficulties which prevent perfection from being at any time the standard of goodness recur here with regard to this view of the ultimate end. But the distinction does not mend matters. Progress always takes place from lower to higher, but upon what grounds can we assert that it involves a highest? Since we never know from our experience a limit to human development, we can suppose that there is a highest, only if we hold the belief that morality will some day pass away, to give place to a different condition: but to suppose that that new condition should be unprogressive is to make an assumption for which we have no evidence.[1]

7. (*b.*) *Adaptation.*—In order to show more clearly the position which belongs to the ideal, I will begin by examining one form in which the conception of an ultimate ideal appears, because the principle upon which it is based has an affinity with the view of morality I have explained. In his *Data of Ethics* Mr. Spencer

[1] If I may venture in a note to wander into such high metaphysical subjects, it is possible that a race of beings might take up the human tale who would not themselves think of their life as a progress, because progress implies time, and their consciousness might not be a time-consciousness at all, though it might be able to understand a time-consciousness like that of human beings. But though for them their life would not be a progress, because they had advanced beyond time, yet *we* can only represent their life as progress.

distinguishes the ideal code of "Absolute Ethics" from the temporary standards of "Relative Ethics." Regarding good conduct as an adaptation or adjustment of man to his environment (an environment mainly social), he maintains that in by far the greatest part of conduct, so far from there being in each case a right and a wrong, what is called right is only a least wrong.[1] He maintains this proposition in antagonism to a statement quoted from Mr. Sidgwick, that "there is in any given circumstances some one thing which ought to be done and that this can be known."[2] The ground upon which ordinary good conduct is declared to be only the least wrong is that good conduct always produces a surplus of pleasure, and therefore conduct which has any concomitant of pain or any painful consequences is partially wrong. Accordingly, Mr. Spencer conceives moral progress as a process by which humanity changes in the direction of a certain "ideal congruity." The member of this ideal society is a person in whom there is "a correspondence between all the promptings of his nature, and all the requirements of his life as carried on in society." He is "the completely adapted man in the completely evolved society," whose behaviour is the "ideal code of conduct," the subject of Absolute Ethics.[3] All other codes of conduct are relative just because they deal with men who are not exactly adapted to their environment: they deal not with the "straight man"[4] of absolute morality, but with the man who is warped out of the straight through want of correspondence. It is nothing but a consequence of this to regard relative morality as deducible from absolute by making allowance for the frictional circumstances which hinder complete correspondence, much in the same way as an engineer in applying the principles of dynamics discounts the varying condition of his materials, the

[1] *Data of Ethics*, p. 260 (3d ed.).
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 259.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 275. Cp. ch. v., § 28.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 271.

strength of the iron, the elasticity of the wood, and the like.[1] This ideal Mr. Spencer sketches in outline so far as it can be determined.[2] He regards it as partly realised in our present conduct, wherever an act is productive of nothing but pleasure, his typical instance of such conduct being the "relation of a healthy mother to a healthy infant."[3] It will be observed that Mr. Spencer draws no distinction between what is moral or right and what is perfect: his ultimate ideal is not simply the highest, but that which is the only right conduct. With him rightness or goodness includes perfection.

8. The picture of absolute morality which is here drawn is in itself a perfectly legitimate one. This complete adaptation of man to his conditions has often been criticised as a state of stagnation. But such criticism seems to me to rest on a misunderstanding. The ideal conduct has been compared by Mr. Spencer to the motion of the planets, in mobile equilibrium, round the sun. Such motion is certainly not stagnation, but rhythmical movement. Just as every position of the planet creates the succeeding position, so as one human want is satisfied it gives place to another, the wants and their gratifications recurring in regular order. So far from being a conception of stagnation, a conception of this kind is involved, as we have seen,[4] in every moral judgment, and there is no need to explain it further. In so far as Mr. Spencer conceives that the only ideal is the absolutely right conduct, his conception is not only legitimate, but true. It would be more to the purpose to criticise any attempt to describe the absolute ideal as it appears in this view, for our ordinary experience teaches us that we can discover what is really suited to our conditions only by actual trial, and that the development of morality depends on the creation of new senti-

[1] *Data of Ethics*, p. 269. [2] *Ibid.*, ch. xvi. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 261.
[4] See above, Bk. II., ch. ii., p. 106.

ments and new ideals of character which cannot be forecast in detail. Though morality grows by certain and intelligible laws, it cannot be predicted. Though all the conditions which produced the Christian morality were present and determined it with the accuracy of a natural law, who could have predicted the "little more" germinating in the minds of men, which, when it came to light, was to change the face of society? Just as, according to the famous saying, you cannot know a hero till he appears, neither can a moral development be known, until by the progress of character it is already accomplished.

9. It is more important to observe in this view the twofold position, namely, that the absolute right is a code of conduct which concludes a long course of development, and that because all preceding morality is a progress towards it, our ordinary codes can never claim to be good, but only the least bad. The two doctrines imply each other logically, but with both of them the analysis of morality which I have given stands in opposition. Using the conception of a mobile equilibrium, we found it to be not a goal of progress, but the meaning of goodness at any time. If we are inclined to think that absolute ethics bears a similar meaning in Mr. Spencer's doctrine, we should be proceeding against both the spirit of his doctrine and his own words. A "transition which has been, still is, and long will be in progress,"[1] is, by the very meaning of the words, not an indefinite progress. That "there has been, and is, in progress an adaptation to the social state,"[2] implies the same conception of goodness as actually to be attained when progress is ended; the idea of an "ultimate" man has the same meaning. As to the second position, instead of good conduct being only relatively good, as the least wrong under the circumstances, we have seen that the distinction of good and bad (right and wrong) arises within the limited range of

[1] *Data of Ethics*, p. 261. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 275.

conditions that are to be met by good action. Upon the former question, which is one of ethical theory, the moral consciousness itself is of course silent: but upon the latter, which concerns the moral distinctions themselves, it declares itself without uncertainty. It accepts the statement quoted from Mr. Sidgwick, and holds that in all circumstances there is some one course of conduct which is right (making allowance for those cases where two modes of action may be chosen indifferently[1]), however hard it may be for any one person to find it, and that if it is done, a man is so far a good man, and absolutely good. The moral consciousness is therefore against the relativity of morality. It is natural indeed for Mr. Spencer, holding that any concomitant of pain makes an action wrong, to describe existing morality as merely relative. But there are two remarks to make upon this position, which, though they delay the argument, will make the notion of the absolute rightness of any moral conduct clearer. First, we must recall what has been explained before, that owing to the disposition of the good man, the pleasure itself of doing the right act will outweigh or be worth more than its attendant pains. And though few or no acts are unaccompanied by pain, because in doing a duty we may have to rupture many other sentiments, yet in a society of good men which is what the moral law describes, these painful incidents will have no weight, because every one will adjust himself with equanimity to the needs of others. The second remark is the converse: that except upon such an understanding not even the acts which are declared to be typical of absolutely right conduct can be free from concomitant pain. The nutrition of a child by its mother may be pleasant to both the parties concerned, but except for the moral acquiescence of others, as, *e.g.*, their fellow-

[1] That is to say, where there is a choice of means, and either alternative may be adopted without detriment to the action, though they cannot both be omitted. See before, p. 55.

travellers in a third-class railway carriage, it may cause a surplus of discomfort. And will the ideal state exhibit no competitions, such as rivalry in love, which can be ended indeed with the contentment of all persons, but assuredly not without attendant pain?

10. I have dwelt on these two tenets of the theory which is under examination, because, though a misrepresentation, they are an attempt to express two things which are involved in morality as we know it in our lives: that certain conduct is required, and therefore morally good, but that the performance of good conduct still leaves a further ideal to be attained. These elements are translated into the conception of an absolute good, to which other good is only an approximation. The source of the failure seems to lie in the conception of 'adaptation' or 'adjustment,' which is a commonplace category of the ordinary thinking of to-day. Morality is rightly described as an adaptation of man to his social environment. But in using this conception we have to guard against the danger of slipping in an assumption that the environment is itself something fixed and permanent, according to which, as he gradually discovers its character, he must arrange his conduct—which is, to use a homely expression, the cloth according to which he must cut his coat.

This error is, I think, the source of the idea of absolute ethics. The act of adaptation can only be understood as a joint action of the individual and his environment, in which both sides are adjusted to each other. What the environment is depends upon the character or the qualities of the individual, for it is only in so far as it responds to him that it can affect him at all. Hence, for instance, two men may live in exactly the same physical surroundings, but these will be a different environment according to the nature of the persons. The blind man adapts himself to a different environment from the man of normal sight, though they may be in presence of the

same objects. Supposing the former to recover his sight, his environment will change as well. In the animal world the case is the same: the environment of the amœba consists of the things which can come in its way to be used as food or rejected: everything else would be to it, in Kantian phrase, as good as nothing. Supposing an animal to be evolved which can assimilate what the amœba rejects, the same objects will form a different environment, for they appeal to different powers. With the enlargement of the animal's powers the environment changes, sometimes it may be in the actual range of its extent, sometimes in the wealth of its properties. A scholar works within walls lined with books which are his most familiar companions, with whom "he takes delight in weal, and seeks relief in woe." But if loss of faculties should deprive him of his interest or understanding, the same books would be to him no more than calf-bound parallelopipedons containing printed matter, or would affect him only by dim memories of the former intimacy.

The environment, therefore, changes as the individual changes, and the act of adaptation is thus not a mere one-sided modification, but a process of selection from both sides, not the mere operation upon the individual of a foreign body which remains constant, but a contribution to a joint result. What the individual does, and what the environment is, are settled at one and the same time by the act in which they are said to be adjusted, and they both vary together. The difficulties which beset our modern notion are almost anticipated by Aristotle in the explanation he gives of how perception comes about. This, too, he regards as the establishment of a proportion or ratio (the Greek equivalent for adaptation) between the sense and the object, a process to which both the factors contribute in such a way that the sense which before was a mere capacity of, *e.g.*, sight, is realised as the act of sight, and what was before the

act an object merely to an outside intelligence becomes realised as the thing seen.[1]

11. What follows from this? Since the environment changes with the growth of that which is to be adapted to it, it follows that adaptation, wherever it exists, and so far as it exists, is perfect adaptation. To suppose that the environment itself remains the same while it is only the adaptation that changes, is to take the view of some higher organism regarding the lower *de haut en bas.* It is only from the more exalted point of view of the higher creature which is able to appreciate a greater range of properties in the surrounding world, that the acquiescence of the lower organism can be judged imperfect. But the surroundings of the lower are not those of the higher, and if the lower is adapted to its environment its adaptation is perfect.

Let us apply the general result to the particular case of man, without any further inquiry into what the environment is. If the standard of morality means adaptation to the conditions, so far as these conditions can be appreciated by the sentiments of any one age, then all conduct, in so far as it is right, is absolutely right, and nothing is added to rightness by the epithet absolute. Human nature may hereafter develop indefinitely in range and delicacy, but it is only with the sentiments of any one age that we are concerned. The higher sentiments of the future, though undoubtedly they have their origin in the present, are not the factors which a man contributes to the social order.

12. But 'adaptation to the environment' or 'to the conditions of life' is, like many other formulas, something which it is good to respect, but not good to respect too much. It may mean something very important or not, according to the answer we give to the question, what environment? or what conditions? Every successful life means adaptation to its conditions; and these are partly

[1] *De Anima*, II., c. 5.

physical, partly consist of lower and higher forms of life, and partly of the members of the same species. Every animal which can maintain its life is in adaptation to its environment: it can utilise the climatic forces and the lower forms of life, and it can escape destruction by the higher, while at the same time it performs its duties towards its own kind—the production and nurture of offspring. But the bare formula of adaptation means nothing more than the fact of existence. For adaptation does not mean that animal species adjust their habits to their conditions; on the contrary, the meaning of natural selection is that only those species live, which being adapted to the conditions, propagate offspring, while others die out. Adaptation to the conditions as such teaches us nothing as to the nature of the organism: for all functions are reactions upon the conditions, and therefore so far adaptations. But it points to something behind. It means that *all* the functions of the animal are adapted to the conditions, and this means that its functions are adapted or adjusted to one another under the conditions. The same sun shines upon men and beasts, but it is utilised very differently. They are adapted to it in so far as they take up from it enough heat to supply waste in other directions. Adaptation to the conditions is therefore equilibrium under the conditions.

13. But there is one part of the environment with which each organism has a special relation, the members of its own kind. All other conditions are of importance only in so far as they enable an animal to live conformably to its type. Equilibrium within the animal means adjustment to this type. But since each individual is only a repetition of the specific type, this adjustment implies no organic relation between one member of the type and another, except so far as there is division of labour, as in the sexes, or in the social communities, such as those of bees.

When we come to men, the equilibrium within the individual and the equilibrium within his species the society coincide, and we can see at the same time the supreme importance of adaptation to members of the same type. Adaptation to the environment means for man adjustment to the social state under its conditions. The non-human environment is only subordinate to the human. Thus the actual physical forces enter into the environment only as the basis of activities or sentiments which affect other men. Land, for instance, is a natural agent, but it enters into the moral system only because being the means of gratifying certain wants (physical sustenance or even mere desire of possession), it is the basis of the institutions of temperance and of property and industrial life. The adaptation of man to his environment means in fact an adjustment by which the conflicting interests of various individuals in a society are reconciled. Morality means a system of conduct in which good persons acquiesce. The adjustment means the creation of a certain type of character, all such characters acquiescing in one another's free development, and conversely those lines of conduct are considered free development in which the other characters can acquiesce. Hence, even though a good act may under the circumstances cause pain (and it would be difficult to suppose a good act under any circumstances whatever not causing some degree of pain somewhere), this suffering is acquiesced in by those who bear it, because owing to their characters they recognise its inevitableness. It is owing to their characters that these jarring incidents which may be removed by advancing civilisation are not felt to destroy the equilibrium of society. In this way the moral conduct of every age is the state of adaptation, and absolutely good.

14. What has been demonstrated above at such length of adaptation applies equally well to perfection. Wherever there is goodness there is adaptation: and

there is also perfection, for only those faculties are exercised perfectly which are legitimately exercised according to the conditions of equilibrium. Independently of that criterion, most perfect may be bad: to be as perfect a villain as possible only enhances the wickedness.

It is curious to find repeated in an age which prides itself upon its sense of history the unhistorical mode of thought which gave rise to the theories of a social contract. I have already once or twice referred to these most instructive theories, and shall perhaps do so again. It would be idle to maintain that the inventors of the original contract did not believe it to be historically true, according to their standard of historical truth. It is needless to say that the original contract is historically groundless. But this negative criticism would show scant respect to these great men, and slight appreciation of their ideas. What they saw was that a settled society at any moment of its existence depends on a consensus between its members, a participation in a common life. This, which is eternally true of society, they made into an actual event, and called the formation of a contract. They reversed what is sometimes described as the true method of philosophy. Instead of elevating the moment by seeing it in the light of the eternal, they lowered the eternal by reducing it to a moment. But every belief in an ultimate ideal of conduct or a 'best' in which mankind shall rest from its labours, whether the ideal is that of perfection or that of complete adaptation, reposes on a similar fiction. When such beliefs at the present time differ from the ideas of a contract, the difference is indeed to their advantage, but it is comparatively unimportant. Convert what is eternally true into a moment of time, and two courses are possible. We may date the moment in the past, and like some of the social contract philosophers regard it as the beginning of decline from a more glorious age. Or we may project it into the future, and it becomes the closing stage of a

long period of preparation, and the entrance upon a final state of perfection. This is the more rational view, and the more inspiring to our hopes, but it is as much a fiction as the view which regarded our civilisation as a change for the worse.

III.—The Change of Moral Ideals.

15. We are now in a position to show how change is involved in the existence of the moral ideal. I will make one remark before proceeding. Since morality shares with truth and beauty the characteristic of being normative, or a standard by reference to which something is judged, what is said of morality will apply with proper changes to knowledge and art; and it will therefore be both legitimate to draw illustrations from the latter, and at the same time unnecessary to repeat constantly that the theoretical statement does not apply exclusively to morality. It will be understood that the differences in the application of the conceptions arise from the fundamental difference in the subject-matter of morality from that of knowledge or art.

The moral ideal consists, as we have seen, in a certain equilibrium, established on the basis of certain conditions—wants and sentiments in moral agents. Its variability depends upon this fact. The moral ideal essentially involves advance, for this reason, that the act of adjustment implied in good conduct itself alters the sentiments of the agent, and creates new needs which demand a new satisfaction. The very persistence in the ideal reveals its inadequacy, because it brings to light new conditions not before contemplated. It is one of our commonest experiences that the mere doing of good actions may not simply intensify our tendency to do them, but may convince us of the necessity of doing new ones which were hidden from us before. Science offers the plainest

instance of the fact. When in investigation we have reduced a large number of facts under a law or a rule, we have provided ourselves with a new point of view from which fresh facts come into sight. By solving the problem set us by the facts under our notice we have provided ourselves with an instrument by which we detect new facts. A new problem is then proposed to which the former solution is inadequate, and it will be observed also that in discovering new facts by the help of a theory which reconciles the old facts, the latter acquire a different value from what they had before. Now goodness is the solution of the problem offered by persons who live together in society; and the attainment of goodness extends the data, and renders the former solution unavailable. Taking a coarser example, we may see from the growth of luxury how the satisfaction of the palate according to the recognised standard alters the susceptibilities: the simpler food which has pleased before induces a more refined and nicer taste, and with it the apparatus required for its gratification. An ordinary act of generosity may and often does awaken in a man a sense of human suffering which he was before a stranger to, or only felt superficially. Tenderness to human beings helps to awaken in us a sense of the sufferings of the lower animals, and the respect for the feelings of animals may end in a general diffusion of that sensitiveness to what even plants may feel, which we find nowadays in delicate natures.[1] Another common phenomenon is partly moral, partly intellectual: when a man exerts himself to please in conversation, he may discover a subtlety and delicacy of intellect which neither he nor his friends suspected. That you never know what you can do till you try is homely advice, usually given to the diffident: we might use it, however, to express the truth that it is

[1] M. de Saintine's well-known story *Picciola* is an instance from fiction of this kind of sympathy with plant-life.

only by acting on your wants that you can ever tell the full range of your powers.

16. This re-statement of the old doctrine of the perfectibility of human nature needs to be supplemented by a reservation. I have taken instances in which the gratification of a sentiment leads to a refinement of the same sentiment. But the modification may be in some other direction. The earnestness with which a man does his duty in some particular way may disclose to him quite new wants: thus, for instance, a man who has to do hard manual labour may come to feel other gifts that he has, say for literature or science, which force themselves into prominence through the concentration of his energies in the previous direction. This may even mean a complete revolution of life. Instances occur where the consistent and unremitting pursuit of an object makes it plain to the person that the object is worthless. Those who have been most eager and thoroughgoing in their persecution of a belief may end like St. Paul in embracing the side of their opponents and becoming their leaders. An artist by painting many subjects in one style may, like Raphael or Dürer, acquire a new style. In science, when a belief is constantly held in the mind, and carried into every nook and corner of experience, some slight new circumstance may show its inadequacy, and a new discovery flash upon the investigator as if by inspiration. It is again the accurate use of such instruments and methods as we possess which teaches us quite new ones. But although the immediate effect of the solution of the problem may be to open up some problems quite alien, the result is the same: for the new faculty which is discovered alters the position of the old in the total sum of knowledge or conduct.

The changes of character in fact, which I have described as due to performance of good, either bring into view wholly new facts, or else they bring out new

properties in the facts previously contemplated. In either case we have an enlargement of our experience, which therefore is an alteration of the environment of a person. And in the introduction of new objects the old objects themselves become changed. Thus one of the commonplaces of historical moralists is the development in the idea of chastity by which what was formerly merely a duty to women of the same state became extended to all alike. This new recognition of the claims of foreigners altered the nature of the duty to fellow-citizens: for the opposite sex now claimed respect not as being members of the same state, but simply as human persons. Or again, when the slave became free he altered the status of the ordinary working-man, whose rights arise from being a man, not from being merely a Greek, or an American. There is an admirable saying of Hegel, that the master does not become really free till he has liberated his slave. Not till then can he himself acquire that sense of human value which the slave has acquired before him, from the emancipating influence of work, of human conquest over resisting material. It was the monks, with their doctrine of the freedom of all mankind, who first taught the world the dignity of labour, by themselves setting the example of manual industry.[1]

17. Both the points which are indicated in the preceding paragraph are so important that I will represent them in another way. In describing the character of moral progress it is natural to use quantitative terms. We may say, for instance, that one ideal realises more of the good than another, and generally that progress arises from the extension of our experience. We get to know more and more of one another, and to see more and more into the nature of the world about us, and the range of our moral obser-

[1] Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, vol. ii. p. 239 (ed. vii.). The change is due especially to the Benedictine monks.

vances becomes thereby enlarged and modified. Thus there is no doubt that the wider acquaintance among mankind due to the Macedonian conquests, and the establishment of the Roman empire, was one of the preparations for the reception of Christianity, with its doctrine of moral equality. Increased susceptibility to human suffering is leading us to extend the duty of respect for sentient life, so as to include the animals also. From the habit of anthropomorphism we have in thinking of animals, some have even invested them with the moral *right* of tender treatment. In reality the new duty is a relation, not of man to the animals, but of man to man, just as to cover a farm land with a sufficient quantity of manure, though necessary to the good of the land, is not a duty towards the land, but to the owner of the land, and to the rest of society. Moreover, every extension of knowledge and the arts, leading as it does to new institutions, must modify morality by the new conditions it creates. The invention of the steam engine is responsible not merely for material advantages, and for the moral changes that arise directly out of them, but for other changes as well. To attend a sick friend may not have been a duty when it took days to reach him, but may be when he can be reached in a few hours. The consideration which a man formerly spent on the question of a journey to Italy, he may reserve at the present day till he has to think of a voyage to Australia. And the restlessness and enterprise which the discovery has made possible, have opened up new possibilities to which conduct must be adapted, and have set new problems for morality.

18. But in thus measuring progress by the new elements which it absorbs from extended experience, fresh discoveries in nature and fresh claims of human persons having come into view, we have to bear in mind the two things which are implied in the preceding section. First, the extension of experience is the source of enlarged

morality only for the character which can appreciate it, or, as before explained, the new environment is created by the new susceptibilities of those who act in adjustment to it. To take the former instances, the wider interest felt in mankind was due not merely to the contact with more persons on the one side, but to the combination of this with a more delicate and cosmopolitan sentiment on the other, a sentiment which was fostered in Greece and Rome by the reflection of the Stoic philosophers. The enlargement of moral experience is therefore more properly an enlargement of moral character.

Secondly, the change in the environment due to extension is also a change in the former environment. This has been illustrated sufficiently. It shows that it is not enough to represent the change as a merely quantitative one. The distinction of the Christian from the Greek morality has been expressed,[1] and rightly, in the formula that duties which before were limited to Greeks are now extended to all mankind. But though the ideas can be truly expressed in quantitative terms, the distinction involves more, namely, a change in the principle of character itself, to which duties which were invested with a kind of exclusiveness present themselves in a more idealised and elevated form.

19. Thus a change of sentiments arises from the mere fact of doing right. The adjustment leads to a maladjustment, because the qualities of the persons who are to enter into the moral relation are altered. This maladjustment is to be distinguished from the re-arrangements which are contemplated by the statical ideal of morality, due to the mere rotation of wants in society. There are many sides to an individual's activities, and many persons with whom he stands in connection: as he moves from act to act, he goes through the varied

[1] By T. H. Green, in an admirable discussion of 'The Greek and the Modern Conceptions of Virtue' (*Prolegomena*, Bk. III., ch. v.).

round of demands that are made upon him: and his life is made up of a great deal of repetition and a few trying cases, in which he has to exercise his moral perceptions more attentively. In sketching out this rotation of duties we include, as was before observed, the gradual strengthening of the character as it progresses, as well as the change in functions which is appropriate to the rise of youth into manhood, and the decline of manhood into age. As each of these duties is performed a new one is called forth. Every act produces a kind of dislocation, but these rearrangements, which spread through society like circles on the water, are all within the moral system, which is not a stable but a mobile system, always shifting its internal elements like the pieces in the kaleidoscope, or the intricate movements of a ballet, while constraining them within the same law.

But the change of the ideal is not of this kind. It implies more than a rearrangement. There is an actual maladjustment, because elements not contemplated before are introduced.[1] The good act ceases to be good by its performance. The former moral ideal ceases to satisfy,

[1] The difference between changes within a system and change from system to system may be represented in a diagram. In figure 1, the

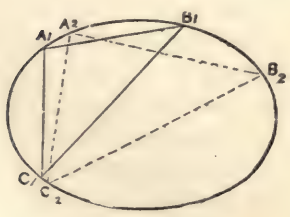

Fig. 1.

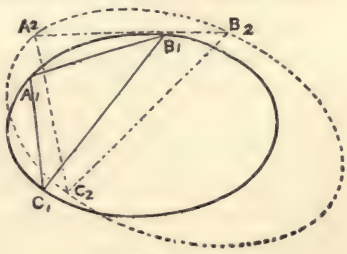

Fig. 2.

persons A, B, C, shift their positions on the same locus (the changes being represented as changes of position, though in reality they correspond to changes of activity which conserve the individual's position). In figure 2, the change is to a new locus adjacent to the old. (The new positions and relations are represented by dotted lines. The ellipse is chosen only for convenience, and the changes are of course exaggerated.)

for there are fresh needs to be taken into account. The old equilibrium ceases to be an equilibrium under the changed conditions. There is a new equilibrium required represented by a new ideal. If we suppose the ideal good man to have a continuous life, then as the society changes the reform for which he strives, on the basis of his consciousness of the enlarged demands of human nature, will be the new ideal of the society. This new ideal having been established, he will discover again that it is insufficient in its turn, and after many modifications of this kind the ideal will come to bear a wholly different appearance from that with which it started.

The process by which the replacement of the old by the new ideal takes place will occupy us later. We can see at any rate now that here a variety of the original species has replaced its parent: this variety produces a fresh variety, till in the end a new species altogether is developed, the descent of which from the original can only be recognised by tracing the intermediate steps which are recorded in history.

20. In thus personifying the moral ideal, and showing how it changes, I have for clearness' sake supposed that there is a certain point in the existence of a society at which the change of sentiments, and consequently of ideal, takes place. This gives the impression that the modifications take place at intervals, between which the ideal remains permanent. Such an impression would be mistaken. The process is in reality quite continuous, and the moments where distinct changes seem to occur are only those where the modifications have so accumulated as to become distinct, or very marked. No matter how slight the change produced, the realisation of the ideal alters the character of the good man, and creates a maladjustment between him and others, which is solved by a new ideal. The good becomes bad in virtue of performance, that is, it is bad for the changed conditions. Its strength is turned to weakness; and though it may

take many years before its change becomes marked, the ideal varies continually, and is never permanent.

The perpetual and continuous movement of the moral ideal, though contrary to current conceptions, can be tested by taking the history of any institution which has been found wanting. Before there is an overt change there is always a silent process by which conduct becomes modified in the given direction. Without such insensible growth it would be impossible to explain a new order of moral ideas, which would otherwise seem to start into being at once. Take the case of tenderness to the animals, which may be regarded as a recognised duty, at least in England. The rapid acceptance of the reform shows that there was already a sentiment and a rule in its favour, never perhaps formulated or even recognised, but affecting the general conduct. Or take a social reform, like the introduction of state schools, which satisfies a growing demand for the right of education. Before the sentiment takes the definite shape of determining state action, it exists in the agitation for improved instruction, and in the effort to supply it by private enterprise.

21. If this proposition is true, the difference of so-called stationary societies from progressive ones can lie only in the comparative slowness with which changes take place in the former. A society may change very little, and yet be in movement. It is always difficult to know how far there is change in backward civilisations. When a people is far removed from us in manners and ideas, the stages of its growth will seem as indistinguishable as the faces of the individuals who compose it. And it is certain that in the East, for instance, and among barbarous tribes, the rate of change cannot be detected. The less highly organised a society is, the less chance is there of free development: but the manner in which the East adopts Western civilisation seems to show that there must have been a ripening of minds which has prepared the way.

As there is a difference between different societies in rate of change, so there is a similar difference as between different parts of conduct. We have seen that law is a part of moral conduct. One of the common distinctions drawn between law and morality is that while the latter can change freely the former cannot. Law is one part of the moral code to which a statutory sanction has been given, and it acquires thereby an artificial rigidity: hence the notorious fact that it always lags behind morality. It is able neither to take account of all possible varieties in the cases which fall under it, nor to adapt itself entirely to changing conditions. Justice in the shape of equity has continually to interfere in order to check the inadequacy of the law. But though law without morality would be comparatively unyielding, it does not itself fall outside the influence of progress. If we take the strictly negative law which is administered by the courts, there are few cases in which a certain discretion is not allowed in the amount of punishment, of which discretion advantage is taken when the law becomes manifestly unsuitable. In the next place, when the law becomes bad, it is not administered. In the revolt against excessive punishments, especially death punishments, juries cannot be found to convict. When we come to positive law, on the other hand, law, that is, which creates institutions, we have a rapid though not a constant succession of changes: there would otherwise be no need of legislators. Thus law, though apparently so stable, is really in change as well as morality, and in its public and overt character there is a good reason why it should have a greater permanence, and form the more or less fixed basis upon which changes are superimposed by the faster growth of ordinary non-legal morality.

22. The apparent though illusory permanence of law naturally suggests an inquiry into the moral standard, which appears to have something of a more or less fixed character. Can we assert of the moral standard, as of

morality itself, that it is in continuous change? The proposition seems opposed to our experience. But there are two main reasons why the moral standard does not always appear to us in this changeful light. First the changes in the moral order are infinitesimal, and are not appreciable till they have accumulated. Practically, two stages not separated by a long interval are indistinguishable, and this is why the moral standard seems to remain fixed for a long period, and then, to the delight of those who believe in an unaccountable interposition of free will, to make a sudden leap. The institutions in question vary silently, but their formulation in language remains the same. Moreover, what is commonly called the moral standard is a kind of generalisation from the extremely various opinion of different persons as to what is or is not right. It is a floating code, which is therefore not likely to coincide with what is the real standard, which registers the conduct constituting equilibrium, and is possessed by the good man. Perfectly good men are impossible. The standard current is therefore nothing more than a common understanding, which every one, even every good man, expresses differently: it is no more an exact expression of the truth, than is, let us say, a great scientific conception (like development), which regulates all knowledge, but is amongst the educated little more than the name of a general way of thinking, while the thing itself is becoming at the hands of men of science themselves indefinitely modified or even transformed.

23. The second reason for the apparent permanence of conduct is that we disguise its real character from ourselves through the practice I have mentioned before of describing it in terms of virtues rather than of institutions. Chastity and courage and temperance are general names which we retain, while the conduct included under them may vary. The retention of the name indicates nothing more than continuity of tradition and permanence of form. But under the same designations the contents

of the virtues change from age to age. It is always right to be courageous, but in the most limited sense of military courage the virtue is different with the man who faces a line of spears, and with one who lives under the dispensation of gunpowder. The existence of the sexes makes chastity a permanent virtue, but it has an entirely different content when it ceases to apply merely to a few persons closely related in blood and language. Family virtues are permanent, but the gradual emancipation of women which is proceeding before our eyes is leaving its effect upon the domestic relations, and how much further it will modify them we cannot now foresee. Or to take another instance from what is passing at the present time. While respect for property remains a duty, the institution of property is being sensibly modified in practice, and even in actual law; and according to the law of continuity the change has been slowly prepared by the growth of feelings which, though not taking immediate effect in altering the terms upon which property is held, have by all manner of expedients—combinations, strikes, extension of political privileges, struggles against the aristocracy and the *bourgeoisie*, lowered the prestige and the opportunities of great property.

24. Before proceeding with the abstract theory, I will stop to notice two points in which the idea of variability affects the statical conception of order. The first is the formation of habits. A habit was described as a mass of similar acts, or the disposition towards them, and the moral ideal contemplates the formation of such habits as a necessary condition of goodness. But our experience teaches us that there must be in the good man a progressiveness of habit which makes it not a mere repetition or simple hardening of the character into a fixed mould, but a growth. In treating goodness as good habits we are of course taking into account the psychological history by which after a time action becomes so regular as to be almost mechanical. But we require of

a good man that he should not only be constant, but that his habits should not become so rigid as to fail of response to fresh needs which development evokes. Just as we do not consider a man to possess truth who persists in discredited beliefs, neither do we account a habit good which has become rigid and insensible. In practice there are indeed careful limits observed: we do not expect a man who has grown up under an old order to throw himself into the front of a new movement. But we do expect that he should adapt himself within certain limits. For instance, supposing a certain amount of culture has become indispensable, we do not require an old man to acquire it himself, but if he was so dead to the new requirement that he did not bring up his son better than himself, he would be condemned. We do constantly condemn persons who fail from force of habit to modify their conduct: and we shall see how much of badness is nothing but the survival into a new order of an antiquated though once highly respectable ideal. If there seems any cruelty in the matter, it is no greater than there seems to be in every moral condemnation in the eyes of those who reflect that the agent did only what his character prompted him to do.

The other subject is the conscience, which, as we know, is perpetually urging us to do things not included in the existing law. Conscience has been described as the counterpart in sentiment of the moral order. This view is met at once by the objection that it is more constantly operative in changing the moral order than in maintaining it: so much so, that conscience is imagined to be in actual antagonism to the more external commands of what is called mere conventional morality. It is easy now to see that conscience may be in perpetual change and yet represent the moral order: when it is antagonistic to an existing ideal, it is because it corresponds to the new ideal which is to replace the former. Only on such terms do we allow that the conscience is a guide to

action, in cases where we can get no certain voice from custom. The authority of conscience belongs to it as the vicegerent of the law: its inventiveness and occasional hostility to the actual law arise from its sharing in the continual variation of the sentiments which are equilibrated in each moral ideal.

25. Thus we find, to resume, that goodness is in perpetual movement: so soon as it is attained it becomes evil, and a fresh standard of goodness arises. This has been represented above by personifying the ideal, and supposing the person to change with each new ideal. We can say, then, that every good act alters the moral standard. But can we reconcile this with the statical conception of good? Goodness consisted, we saw, of a system of conduct in the individual himself or in society, and this system forms a series in time. It would seem to follow that, if goodness is always progressive, no second act would be performed under the same law, though the very idea of the law means a series of acts. There is less difficulty in the assertion than appears at first sight. One misconception may be anticipated at once. We are not to suppose that if fifty good men in a society act rightly, that fifty different new ideals ensue, for the ideal is one for the whole society, and represents the equilibrium of its members. The fifty new ideals are only ideals for the persons themselves, and it depends on their representing the new equilibrium or not, whether we shall call the persons good or bad. Next, the initial difficulty of reconciling an ideal which implies a series of acts with a constant change of the ideal from act to act disappears when we reflect that the ideal at any one moment would be in fact realised in a series, supposing the conditions did not alter meanwhile, and that while the system of conduct is serial, it is realised at any one moment in the mind of a man whose sentiments correspond to its requirements.

There is in fact nothing more or less mysterious in

the changes of the ideal than the truth that at any one time there is a certain set of conditions which have to be utilised for morality, and that these conditions change. The distinction of good and bad arises within society itself, and its incidence shifts as the materials vary. But the nature of the fresh redistribution of good and bad arises from the actual attainment and subsequent failure of a former distribution. The constant and continuous change of the moral ideal only corresponds to what we find in the animal world. The life of every species is continuous while undergoing continuous modification. As any one point in a river is perpetually being occupied by a fresh drop of water, so the younger animals with their slight differences from their parents grow up to maturity and are continually replacing the old. Moral development is the history of human nature exhibited (to use a metaphysical phrase) as a Becoming, and this process implies a perpetual failure in success, the element of success being represented by the actual organisation of the conditions of conduct, that of failure by the development of fresh materials to organise.

26. In this process we see exhibited the interplay of the element of goodness or rightness with that of perfection. In all actual goodness we have perfection attained as well: but in the statical notion of goodness perfection is subordinate—only that exercise is perfect which is legitimate. But in the notion of progressive goodness perfection regains its rights. For goodness, having secured perfection, creates new materials which destroy the old equilibrium, and call for a new one. Goodness determines perfection, but changes in perfection determine therefore changes in goodness. If we assume that the change of ideals is not merely a change but a progress, we may describe morality as the creation of a 'better,' because each stage is the product of new materials handed over from the previous stage. But this 'better' is not the growth of a greater rightness. The change

is from one standard of right to another, and this involves the change from a lower to a higher development. Morality developes by an oscillation of two movements, the one solving the problem proposed, the other destroying each solution as it emerges. If, therefore, we regard not so much the way in which morality yields to a succeeding stage as the way in which it grows out of the failure of the preceding, its rightness or goodness is always the combination of a right with a higher, and in this sense is always a better.

IV.—Attributes of the Moral Law.

27. In this interplay of goodness and perfection we have the explanation of what is one of the most striking of ethical phenomena, that a man may be equally good in different ages. In Greece conduct was permitted and approved which among ourselves we should condemn: but it would be monstrous to deny a good Greek the title of a good man. The morality of Englishmen in the nineteenth century is more highly developed than it was in the twelfth, but a good man is no better now than a good man then. I exclude at present the case of contemporary societies at different levels of civilisation, though, as we shall see, they fall under the same principle, in order to take ideals which are plainly descended from lower ideals. The advance to the higher has come about through the actual attainment of goodness in the lower stage.

In declaring good conduct to be good at any stage we at the same time declare it to be *absolutely* good or right. Morality knows no distinction between what is good and what is absolutely good. The term absolute merely expresses that the problem has been solved, that an equilibrium has been found under the conditions. How such an adjustment is possible, as well at a low as at a

high stage of development, will be evident from the remarks on adaptation which have preceded. In the lower stage human nature has a narrower range, not because it does not contain the seed of all future development, but because only certain of the qualities with which we afterwards become acquainted have made themselves felt, and can be appreciated by the mind. The mind thinks differently of, let us say, eating and drinking, or bravery, because the range of interests contained under these terms is different. But the adjustment being once made, the good which results is absolutely good. Accordingly there is no such thing as an absolute morality in comparison with which other conduct is variable and relative. The relativity of good conduct, instead of being a term of reproach, is in reality its highest praise: for it implies that the conduct takes account of those conditions, and no more than those conditions, to which it is meant to apply. But just because it is related, and related appropriately, to its conditions, is it both good (and absolutely good), and at the same time inadequate to the new conditions which its performance generates, so that if it were still performed it would be stigmatised as bad in comparison with the new ideal.

28. The idea of an absolute as contrasted with a relative morality runs up into that of morality as an eternal and identical law. From the point of view taken here, the *eternity* of a moral law stands and falls with its absoluteness. A truth which is once true is eternally true: a generalisation or law once discovered correctly does not cease to be true of the facts to which it applies because it is proved to be unable to comprehend other facts as well: it was true according to the measure of truth which the age had attained. In like manner an ideal of good conduct, being a solution of its conditions, is eternally true for them.

The question of the *identity* of the moral law is a

more difficult one, and it is often hard to separate the two ideas of identity and eternity in many ethical writers. Many different answers may be given to the question. The identity may be described as one of tendency.[1] Chastity, courage, are not the same in different ages, but they tend in the same direction. Such an answer is too vague to be of use, and it obliterates the variability of the institutions comprehended under the same names. Or we may say that morality is eternal or identical because it formulates "the most fundamental conditions assignable, the permanent conditions of social vitality, which remain constant through an indefinite series of more superficial changes in the social organisation."[2] But though it is true that there are certain broad lines upon which morality proceeds, which vary much less or more slowly than the minuter details of life, yet these fundamental institutions are themselves subject to change. I have quoted instances of changes in the cardinal virtues so recently that I need not repeat them here. Their permanence is delusive, though their fundamental character is obvious. On the ground of their elementary character they have come to be regarded as universal or natural laws, in distinction from mere special institutions. The distinction is one which it is convenient to make. But if it is supposed to constitute a difference of principle, all the objections which Locke brought against the theory of innate moral ideas are available still. What Locke felt, and, as I think, rightly, was, that so far as morality is of practical value at all, it must be taken to mean the observances it implies, and from this point of view there is no single moral law which has not changed indefinitely. Either, therefore, we must simply hold that some laws are more general than others, a proposition so obvious that no one will deny it, or else we must regard the universality, or identity, or naturalness of morality as

[1] Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. i., ch. i., especially p. 100.
[2] L. Stephen, *Science of Ethics*, p. 154.

lying elsewhere than in the criteria which have been assigned.

A third answer, that morality is identical or eternal in virtue of its form, is, I believe, the true answer, and is really the solution which I have given above. What the form of the moral law is is matter of dispute: but regarding it as the equilibrium of social forces in an order of conduct, it is *ipso facto* eternal and identical, being true wherever its conditions are found.

29. It must be admitted that such a result is of no great value in itself except negatively. The more important conception concerning the moral law is that of its *unity*. Morality being a development, the separate ideals never can be used for ever or identically: the identity which they have is that they are the successive stages of one continuous law. Every ideal while giving place to a new one is the foundation of it. In creating a new standard we do not begin afresh, but at some point where the old was found insufficient. Progress is thus not mere destruction of the lower, but fulfilment. The lower ideal never remains exactly as it was, but its labours are utilised, just as a theory of science which is inadequate is not simply rejected, but transformed or corrected. Thus, for instance, in the passage from Greek to Christian morality, while license towards foreigners is condemned, what really happened was that the same rights are extended to them as were before reserved for Greeks only. The new ideal puts a new meaning into the old to suit the new conditions. It rejects the old as such, but builds upon it. We can only understand the later ideal as growing directly out of the earlier in a stream of succession of which the moments are the temporary moral ideals. From considering this continuity of moral ideals we may form to ourselves the idea of a single law or plan of moral progress, but it is a problem which concerns metaphysics whether we are justified in thinking of this plan as in any sense already

realised as a whole in the mind of God. It is certain that the perpetual failure of man to keep pace with the conditions of his development, his participating in the common groaning and travailing of all creation, is one of the phenomena which lead the mind to the idea of religion.

30. The result may be stated in a few words. All that has been done in the preceding inquiry is to establish the essential variability of the moral ideal and its cause. We find the moral ideal so far agreeing with a natural species, that in course of time, by accumulation of small differences, it leaves its original character behind, and developes into a new form. We have still to show what the process is by which one ideal comes to occupy the place of another. I believe that it is effected by a struggle of ideals which proceeds on the analogy of the struggle of natural species, and that it is the same process which leads to the variety of facts summed up under the head of moral development or progress. In order to examine these phenomena I will therefore first explain how it is that the moral ideal arises, how the distinction of good and bad is produced, and describe the institutions which are connected with this distinction. I can then return to progress as a whole.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN OF MORAL DISTINCTIONS.

I.—The Struggle of Ideals.

1. (*a.*) *Method.*—Good conduct is an equilibrium or adjustment, whether of the powers of the individual himself, or of different individuals in the society. How is this adjustment effected? In other words, how does morality, the distinction of good as against bad, arise? Two ways of handling the question can be dismissed at once, one as beyond our sphere, the other as erroneous. In asking how morality arises, it is not the business of ethics to trace the steps by which morality comes into being from some (real or supposed) lower stage of existence, animal, or even human. We assume the presence of the condition upon which morality depends, a condition which I have expressed as the capacity of being aware of the meaning of actions, or what is equivalent to it, the sociality of human beings. Ethics deals with man always as moral, and in asking how morality arises, it can only properly ask the question how any one particular stage of morality arises. It is left for a comprehensive scheme to fill up the gaps between such a stage and those that precede it.

This last method, though falling outside the scope of ethics, is perfectly legitimate. The erroneous method would consist in supposing that good conduct was adopted by persons who were before non-moral by an actual compromise, and in inquiring what the steps of this process were. To take the idea of adjustment in this literal

sense would be falling into the error of the theorists who invented the social contract. We should be first setting up a fictitious human being who would if left to himself have no morality, and account for his morality by an equally fictitious process which would make of it a manufactured article.

The real method is prescribed by the progressive character of the moral distinction. Given that a phenomenon is in perpetual and continuous change, the process by which any one stage of it arises out of the stage immediately preceding gives the law of the origin of the phenomenon in general. And it is in this sense that its history gives us an insight into its moral nature. Since morality obeys this condition, we must discover the origin of morality by showing what the agency or process is by which a new ideal supervenes upon an old: we must re-discover, in other words, the significance of the moral distinction by a reference to the manner in which it arises. Now moral changes take place in two different ways. Either they grow up insensibly, or they are the result of overt reform. In the former case, though there is always a change in the nature of the objects which persons set before themselves, acting with a consciousness of their meaning, the change is not a matter of reflection. But when a reformer proposes a new scheme, he not only offers what to himself is an object of reflection, but holds it up for the consideration of others. The growth of morality will thus be most easily seen by considering the more reflective process: just as we may learn how species develope in nature by noticing the law under which they change when the conditions are under control and are known, as they are in domestication and breeding.

2. (*b.*) *Incidents of Reform.*—Suppose, then, a reformer introduces, it may be, like Christ or Pythagoras, a new plan of life, it may be only the alteration of some single

trivial institution. His reform comes into contact with many other wills, all of which act out their law, or live according to their ideal, whether they consciously realise their ideal as a whole, or whether only their actions are such as imply this ideal. Some will be good men, whose ideals are therefore instances of the whole social ideal; some will be bad, whose plan of life is different from that prescribed. Its contact with all these wills may prepare for the reform very different fates. Sometimes the reform meets with general acceptance because it agrees with the tendencies of all in their respective positions. It will be adopted as part of the moral code at once, and this is what happens every day with slight reforms which every one feels to be necessary, to be what they want.

At other times the new act, representing the change of ideal, comes into hostility with the ideals of others, and finds no response but opposition. The whole society reacts upon it, and condemns its author as a bad man. But the example of his conduct or teaching remains: a few others carry on in the face of opposition the work he has begun. As time goes on the reform lays greater hold of people's minds, bringing over greater and greater strength to its side, till at last, as in the case of the Christian code, it prevails and wins acceptance. Those who conform to the new ideal are now pronounced good: those who reject it are called bad. The ideal may not establish itself in the form in which it was originally acted upon, but may be altered to suit the forces brought to bear against it. It was perhaps too crudely conceived at first, and drawn on too sharp lines: though intended to be a social law it did not take account of the persons to whom it was to be applied. It wins over adherents partly by modifications in itself, partly by the growth of other minds to meet it. When it prevails, it does so in a form in which it is suited to the aims of those who accept it.

In the process there are forces of innumerable kinds

which determine the resisting persons to accept the new ideal. Some adopt it on deliberate conviction of its value, to others it appeals they know not why, because it is the articulate expression of their dumb wants. Affection or respect for authority may determine others. The conversion of Constantine gave a great impetus to the reception of Christianity, and the early missionaries began by preaching their doctrine to courts. A mere fashion in the clothes, again, is sure of success when a great personage can be induced to adopt it. Sometimes the motive is the mere strength of the movement in favour of the reform which convinces a person that he must yield; sometimes he may feel that, dislike the measure as he may, the forces which it represents will damage him so much if he resists that it is reasonable to yield. A measure may be introduced which impairs his privilege or property, but he accepts it as the expression of a prevailing want with which he must find his account. And the influences which act on a man are not simply his own wishes, but those which spring from his relation to others. But whatever his reason is, when he accepts the reform, his code of conduct changes to suit it, though it was before in resistance. Thus where contrivances exist for determining the strength of an opinion, the opponents of a measure express their dislike by their vote, but obey loyally when it is passed.

3. The chief importance of pleasure and pain lies in the way they enter into the actual determination of the end. We may now explain their participation in the process of moral change. Pleasure and pain produced by an action are the tests of the act being suitable or the reverse to the character (in the widest sense) of the agent. The acceptance of a reform must therefore plainly depend on the pleasures and pains produced by it. If it does not suit my character and aspirations it will cause me pain, and urge me to remove the pain by resistance. When a reformer is condemned, or even, as happens with

the authors of the greatest and most comprehensive reforms, is sacrificed, he does but suffer the reaction of the society which he has injured from the point of view of their own character. On the other hand, when the reform is accepted, it must be that it gives pleasure to the persons concerned. But in saying this we have to remember the distinction of pleasures and pains as ethical (or effective) and pathological (or incidental) pleasures and pains. The total reaction of a man's character upon a stimulus is pleasant to him on the whole, but the pleasure results from a mixture of pleasures and pains. Whatever accords with his bent pleases, whatever resists it pains. Hence when he is face to face with a new form of conduct, he is affected by a variety of feelings. If on a fair trial, weighing one feeling against another, the result is pleasant, his response to the reform will take the form of acceptance. His effective pleasure will lie in the direction of the proposed ideal, and he approves. If the result is painful, he will reject it, or will act so as to lead to its modification. His effective pleasure will lead him in the contrary direction, and he disapproves.

The balancing of pleasures and pains is effected in the way with which every one is familiar, not by a reflective consideration, but by a kind of intuitive act, in which all degrees of reflection are involved according to the temperament of the person. The poet, in virtue of his poetic gift, combines into a single picture ideas which the unimaginative mind may interpret by following many lines of thought, or the philosopher may express by abstract arguments, or the prosaic reader may make intelligible to himself as allegories, all of which may be foreign to the poet's own mind. In the same way, each man's approbation or judgment upon the pleasures or pains is a collective act, in which only subsequent reflection may be able to disentangle the intricate web of sentiments to which the action makes appeal.

4. How he will act depends then on his feeling, as he is affected at all the places where he is exposed to the new forces. Of this feeling he is the only judge, and the result cannot be predicted. Thus, supposing a reform to be adopted by the society, so as to be part of the moral law, it is because conformity to it produces pleasure to all those who are good, the pleasures in question being the ethical pleasures, which may be at a very low point of intensity, but involve at least contentment. On the other hand, if the balance of pleasures and pains produced by a reform (the balancing being effected in the only way it can) be on the side of pain, the resultant actions will be antagonistic, and the reform abandoned. Practically we know that in considering a change we ask ourselves whether it is likely to produce happiness or not, because we know that happiness is the test by which we measure the success of a reform in meeting the real wants of our fellow-men.

It is necessary, however, to repeat what was before shown (in Book II.), that though the approval or disapproval of a reform is settled by the pleasures and pains it causes, this pleasure of approval is not the cause or ground of the reform being accepted, or the pain of disapproval the cause of its rejection: they are simply the fact of its acceptance or rejection. The cause of a reform being accepted is the nature of the reform itself: the proposed mode of life has a quality which suits the qualities of the men who are to live it, and all the pleasures and pains out of which the reaction of those persons is determined arise from the congruity or incongruity of the reform with the various properties of their natures. Hence the approval is the fact of the suitability of the reform as a whole, and it is the effect of the reform being what it is.

5. When the new ideal is definitely established those who do not obey it are bad, those who do are good. But the incidence of the distinction between good and

bad may be different: those who are good under the old may be bad under the new ideal, and conversely a person who before was ranked as a criminal may perhaps find grace under a new scheme of society. The line of demarcation of good from evil is drawn differently, just as in the course of political history, while the sentiments of the whole mass constantly expand, the dividing lines of parties shift, as the more timid or less adventurous members of the party of change fall behind and join those whose temperament inclines them to be suspicious of innovation. Consider how this change in the incidence of moral distinction arises. Every moral ideal is one for the whole society, pre-supposing differentiations of functions among its members, and also tolerating and utilising those distinctions of gifts and development, or generally perfection, which constitute differences of merit. The new ideal is one in which there will be distinctions of the same kind. But in the attempt to impress itself on the society, it will find some persons unequal to the new requirements, though equal to the former. They do not move fast enough, or are too unimpressible to become sensible of the change, and falling therefore outside the new ideal, representing in their persons an ideal which is not an instance of it, they are condemned as bad. There is, therefore, a kind of circularity in the process by which the moral ideal changes: the standard of good is that which is established, but at the same time only those are good who adopt it. The establishment of the new ideal depends on a process which at the same time determines what persons are to be considered good, that is to say, what types of character are compatible with it. The character which before was not too weak to be good may now drop into the class of the bad. It is as if the new ideal were carried by a unanimous vote, but by depriving of the franchise all who are inclined to vote against it. If fifty men are seeking to arrange a compromise, and five of them resist any change, the

arrangement must be made independently of the latter, who will be treated afterwards according as they obey or resist it. The apparent circularity only represents the fact of the success of the reform. If the persons now condemned were still to be accounted good, there would be no equilibrium, for there would be no assured victory. Suppose a number of rods jointed together in a complex arrangement, so as still to remain movable upon the joints, like the pieces of those machines by which skeins of wool are wound, or of the light framework used to conceal flower-pots. If we alter the position of some of the rods the rest will change position too, but some of them may in consequence be so strained that the joints break, and an adjustment can be effected only by discarding some of the pieces and joining afresh. The figure may illustrate the process by which as the ideal of good changes the incidence of its distinction from evil varies too.

6. (*c.*) *The Struggle of Varieties.*—Reasoning from the establishment of a conscious reform, we may conclude that, where the change is effected gradually by a number of persons who act upon their feelings without knowing the whole aim or bearing of their conduct, the process is of the same character as where a reformer initiates a reflective scheme. In both cases alike the change depends on the wills of all the society, and the outcome of the process therefore represents a compromise or adjustment of them, in which some inevitably go to the wall. The compromise is not a process of deliberation in which persons meet together to set their views against one another, though such reflective action may enter into the process, but is effected by a conquest of the new scheme over the old. The new scheme represents an adjustment of society under its new conditions, but is not itself produced by adjustment. But the reason why it prevails is because it represents the *modus vivendi* of the society; or the position of equili-

brium which would be completely realised if all the society were good.

7. By having constantly before our eyes the action of parliaments we might be misled into supposing the new ideal to be definable as merely the will of the majority. It certainly has the majority on its side, for the good is that which has come to predominate. But while it must have the majority on its side, if it is to prevail, its possession of a majority is nothing but the fact of its prevalence. The ground of its prevalence is that it represents the equilibrium, and is therefore the only arrangement that can subsist under the conditions. Hence it attracts the greater forces to its cause. These forces are of all kinds—forces of character, and of intelligence, which range through many degrees of perfection, from the strong to the feeble, from the hard, cold, and unemotional to the sympathetic and impulsive, from the sagacious intelligence with quick insight into the needs of mankind to what is often strongest of all, the dead weight of impenetrable stupidity.[1] Decision by majorities is, in fact, merely an expedient of civilised societies, to determine which way the forces pull, and to avoid the primitive procedure of actual force. "We count heads," as Sir J. F. Stephen says, "in order to save the trouble of breaking them." In a low stage of society the decisive force is that of arms, and riot and violence are the means of victory. In a higher stage we use the milder instrument of the voting-urn. But even here, as in the case of a civil war or armed revolution, the more refined and elevated forces of society may sometimes be reduced to the lower denomination of actual physical strength. There is thus no virtue in the mere preponderance of numbers: it is not that reforms follow the majority, but that a

[1] Goethe after a panegyric on the character of Englishmen, added, "That they are also sometimes complete fools I allow with all my heart: but that is still something, and has still some weight in the scale of nature" (*Conversations with Eckermann*, translated by Oxenford, p. 317).

majority is attracted by a suitable reform. Truth and goodness begin in general with a minority. Voting is thus only a means of discovering the balance of forces, and when it is determined on which side the balance lies, the result is accepted by the loyal opponent as binding upon himself, and he 'likes' it, not because he would not himself prefer something else, but because under the circumstances it is right.

8. The growth of a new ideal is analogous to the growth of a new species in the organic world. According to the generally accepted view, a new species is produced through giving rise to variations which struggle with one another and with the parent species. One of these varieties, in virtue of some natural advantage, is successful over its opponents, and in virtue of this success it produces offspring and overruns the region within which the species was found. The term 'struggle' is thus only a loose term, which does not imply that there has always been an actual combat: and the extirpation of the unsuccessful variety does not necessarily mean that it has fallen a prey to the successful. Sometimes the survival of a variety is due to its being able to escape or conceal itself from the superior forces from exposure to which the other varieties are not able to save themselves.

In the light of this process we may contrast the good and bad in any one age as different varieties of one and the same original ideal. All good men, so far as good, represent ideals which are the individual members of one variety represented by the good ideal: their various degrees of perfection correspond to more or less strong, or swift, or big members of the animal species. All bad men, so far as bad, act upon ideals which form other varieties. There is the variety of thieves, of murderers, and the like. The distinction of good and bad corresponds to the domination of one variety, that of the good, which has come to prevail according to the process described in virtue of its being a social equilibrium. Its

being a social equilibrium corresponds to the natural advantage of the successful animal variety, for this natural advantage is nothing more than suitability to all its conditions of life. The good ideal, then, has been created by a struggle of ideals in which it has predominated. Evil is simply that which has been rejected and defeated in the struggle with the good.

9. This struggle has taken place with all the other varieties and the original species itself, and the victory, as in natural history, has been largely achieved over those who are likest itself, that is, the original species. Hence, what we find if we take badness in any stage of morality is, that it is made up partly of conduct which is a survival from a former condition, like piracy or private justice, partly of other conduct which was devised by persons in the endeavour to change their way of life, other modifications, that is, of the specific idea which have succumbed to the prevailing variety. Putting logs or stones across the rails to wreck a train came in with the railway; and with the use of sulphuric acid in the arts and in healing came in the sacrilege against the human form of vitriol-throwing. But murder and lying and theft are a *damnosa hereditas* left us from a time when they were legitimate institutions: when it was honourable to kill all but members of the clan, or to lie without scruple to gain an end, and when there was promiscuity of property. But these obsolete forms of goodness share in their turn in the inventiveness of evil, and become more subtle and refined by appropriating to their use the devices struck out by men in the effort after fresh goodness. The murderer may use the beneficent skill of the chemist to kill by poisons which leave no trace; when in the organisation of commerce the system of banking arises, with its delicate responsibilities, the banker may rob his clients by investing their money in hazardous speculation; or when the impersonal duty to truth is acknowledged, the man of science who would

scorn an ordinary falsehood may lie by insincerity in his work.

Hence the difference of good and bad represents in reality the struggle or antagonism by which the good establishes its predominance. In condemning a man for a bad act, what you say to him is in effect, your ideal is not the ideal which predominates and is the social equilibrium. The act of condemnation represents the defeat of this ideal in conflict with the successful variety which is the new species, and our approvals or disapprovals are witnesses of the perpetual struggle of good against bad ideals. In declaring an ideal bad, we deny its reality, deny that it is the true ideal, and as we shall see later on, we seek to exterminate it.

10. The reformer and the man who turns out to be bad stand thus originally upon the same level. Each is an instance of a variety of the original species, but the former is the successful variety. The ground of success is that the reformer's ideal is one which consists with the real forces of the society, and can be adopted by the whole: the bad ideal fails because it is not one which can apply to all. This corresponds to a familiar distinction between the reformer and the bad man: the first has before his mind a standard of universal application, and thinks of the good of the whole society, to which, if need be, he sacrifices his life. The ideal of the bad man implies an exception in his own favour, or in the favour of those who are like himself. There is a certain strangeness in speaking of the bad man's ideal at all: most often when we do wrong we have no plan before our mind any more than when we do right, and the bad man rarely thinks of any ideal, and contemplates as little as possible the distinction of right and wrong. But his action represents a plan of life which is a variety of the social ideal, and really includes the rest of society. The ideal of the thief is not simply to have good things for himself: nor again, that all men should be thieves, and no property

exist. He wants a society in which all the rest shall have property, and respect it, while he and his fellow thieves shall take it when they choose. If it were not that his action implies an ideal of society (though not in his mind), we could never try to win him back to morality. His difference from the saint is that his scheme is one which is not utilisable for the whole of the community.

11. But even more important than the demonstration of how the struggle of natural kinds is repeated in man under the form of good and evil, is to bear in mind the difference of the two cases. In morality the struggle is between *ideals*, and persons are concerned only as the bearers of these ideals. Ideals of conduct exist in minds (wills), not in bodies. Hence two important differences. The animal variety predominates by two concurrent methods: it multiplies its offspring and it exterminates other animals, and these two things are practically the same, for other animals die out before the spread of the successful. But in man the predominance of the good does not always require, and except in extreme cases never requires, the extinction of the opposing person, but only the extinction of his ideal, or its retirement from his mind or will in favour of the good ideal. How far the process has organic accompaniments in the brain is a problem I must leave to the physiologists. In the next place, whereas animals multiply by propagation of new individuals, the moral ideal acquires strength by teaching and example, and it acquires adherents not only among the new generation, but among the old. It spreads by converting the lukewarm or the hostile, the ideal being conveyed from one mind to another. Hence while if an animal variety were composed of only a few individuals it would perish, the reformer's cause may win though he individually is destroyed. His ideal lives on in the minds of those whom he has influenced, and his influence may grow greater with his death. Once more it is plain that here too extinction of opponents is identical with multi-

plication of the variety: for it is the teaching or convincing of his fellows which wins the reformer friends, and extirpates their former ideals. Both in the struggle of ideals and in that of species it will be seen how success means actual increase of number.

12. In order to verify further what a difference exists between the behaviour of men and the lower animals in consequence of the fact that moral conduct is an ideal or plan of conscious life, and not merely a mode of action, we have only to look to any moral code which has reached any degree of refinement. Tenderness for the weak and the diseased makes its way into the human ideal. Left to themselves they would die, as weak and diseased animals are killed out by the competition of stronger individuals. The civilised man, on the contrary, seeks to save the weak in health and the old, because mere physical health ceases to hold its predominant position, and has to take its place along with other powers. A weakly man can help his society, provided his ideal be not diseased or corrupt. The old can do little actual service, but to care for their lives is a duty required by sentiments which look beyond the burden of supporting them. And similarly up to a certain point we prevent the imprudent from ruining themselves, by removing temptations from their way, and by seeking to improve their characters. Care for the weak differs of course in different times. When life has risen little higher than institutions for mere self-maintenance, useless lives are left to perish without any compunction. Savages kill many of their female children in order to save the trouble of feeding them. Herodotus tells us of a tribe which ate up its old people to save them, as he naïvely says, from the miseries of great old age. When physical strength is of primary importance, as in classical times, weak children are exposed. It was not till comparatively late in the history of Christianity that hospitals for the sick were instituted; the first was founded at Rome in the fourth

century. Foundling hospitals date from a still later time. One is said to have existed in the sixth century, but Rome had none till the thirteenth. And they did not become general institutions till St. Vincent de Paul gave a fresh impulse to them in the seventeenth century,[1] by founding two hospitals in Paris—in very good time for Rousseau to leave his children in the box to be reared at the cost of the state, which had doubtless originally contracted itself into the duty of maintaining the children of that philosopher.

13. Let us return from this digression to the main course of the inquiry. That the growth of morality depends on experience is a proposition which is not worth while contesting at the present time. It is a truism which would never have been disputed had not the experience been described as merely consisting in pleasures and pains, instead of being always experience of conduct in which pleasures and pains bear their part. But how is this experience acquired? The natural species develop by experience, which they learn by the production of new forms left to survive or perish. These new varieties are expedients hit upon by nature, guesses of nature they may be called. In morality the ideals are discovered by a process which corresponds, in minds which are aware of what they do, to the guesses of nature. Morality is discovered by experiment, a truth which is not so readily recognised as it is that legislation is really a process of experimenting of which we watch the effect.[2] Moral experiments are (as in the insensible growth of the ideal) sometimes nothing more than an action done because its necessity is felt: the reformer experiments consciously. In general an act is thought to suit and is tried: if it

[1] Lecky's *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., ch. iv.; Hospitals, pp. 80, 81; Foundling Hospitals, pp. 32–34 (fourth edition).

[2] Many, like the late Prof. Jevons, would have the experimental method practised more systematically in legislation, trying the effect of a measure over small or chosen areas before extending it over a whole country. See his *Methods of Social Reform*.

really does suit it is accepted, and enters into the standard, and we have seen how it is only by actual reference to the persons for whom it is intended that the success of the experiment can be decided. The conscious process of the reformer is an experiment, like one of those used to obtain scientific knowledge, accurately planned and designed to meet the conditions. The reformer uses the analogies of his past experience and that of others in the same way as the scientific inquirer conducts his experiments with all the insight acquired from his previous training. Or perhaps the reform may be compared to a hypothesis which is counted as true if it explains all the facts. The facts which the moral hypothesis has to explain are the wills of society, not the data of intellect. But though morality is acquired by experiment and hypothesis, it is not merely experimental or merely hypothetical. An experiment which succeeds conveys truth: a hypothesis which explains its facts is indistinguishable from truth, which always implies some kind of guessing.

14. (*d.*) *Corollaries.*—The distinction of the *formally* bad from the *materially* good rests upon the transition from the old ideal to the new, though sometimes we use those terms in describing what is only legally wrong though morally approved. A reformer until his reform is established is formally wrong, for his action violates the predominant ideal. He can be considered materially right only prospectively, in anticipation of the time when his ideal will be accepted, and consequently such judgment is usually only pronounced by his own adherents: it is a judgment within his variety. Time only can prove whether he had really forecast the movement of his society; whether, that is to say, his act is merely to rank as a good intention stultified by its issue, or he is really the pioneer of development. Reformers like Socrates in Greece, or Buddha in India, or Christ, the greatest of all reformers, all of them, though materially

right in so far as they anticipated future ideals, were formally wrong, and suffered for their offences against the established order. It is only from the point of view of their own adherents that they can be said to have acted rightly: although after ages which have come over to their side, looking back with gratitude on the past, may say they were really right, and their opponents wrong. It is idle to reply that right is that which is adapted to the conditions of the time, though men may be too blind to accept it. For the most important and in fact the only important conditions are the sentiments of men, and a reform which is not accepted is shown to be unsuitable to those sentiments. All we can say is that there are two rival standards, one established, the other that of the reformer, and the second is not yet predominant. Every reformer counts the cost of violating the moral order. Sometimes a society may be so divided, as in our civil war, that neither variety is predominant. In such a case we must say, not that there was no rule of right, but that there was a different rule for each of the two halves of the nation.

15. There does not arise any need for the distinction of formally and materially right conduct, until the limits have been overstepped within which it is in any age considered right for a man to act upon his own conviction. These limits are placed very differently in different ages. At present in certain things, and within certain limits, a man is approved if he acts upon his conviction, provided that he has taken proper precautions, and that he is justified in expecting his conviction to prevail. If he does not succeed, he is simply in the condition of an artist who has produced a poor picture, but has done his best. In former times, however, to act upon conviction would not have been tolerated, as when forcible repression of religious practices was part of the moral code. Nothing is more instructive than the common agreement of Protestants and Catholics in the policy of repressing the

other. Our own parliamentary leaders in the seventeenth century were as far removed as possible from any policy of toleration. It was only the Independents who proclaimed liberty of conscience. But though they accomplished the work of liberation, this doctrine of theirs was strange and unacceptable to the mass of the nation. Once the strong hand of Cromwell was removed, and the old dynasty restored, religious conformity was enforced by penal enactments. The greatest name in English philosophy is also the name of the man who did most to stimulate what is perhaps the greatest reform of modern times. Voltaire's adoption of Locke's teaching made toleration familiar through the rest of Europe. But the toleration of independent action at the present time rests upon the same basis as intolerance in the past: it shows how deeply the conviction has sunk into our minds that more is gained for the efficiency of society by freedom within certain departments than by constraint.

16. It will serve further to explain the theory here stated if I defend it against certain misconceptions. An important topic is suggested by the assertion that good represents the balance of all the forces in a society. Does good action, it will be asked, depend on the bad men as well as on the good? Should we relax the laws of property because of the thieves? This question conceals a misconception. Good and evil arise together, and good is therefore always relative to evil, but we do not therefore take our morality from the bad. We cannot in fact know who is bad until the standard is created, but once created, we maintain it against bad men by punishment.

But, on the other hand, the moral standard does depend upon the forces which when allowed free play are stigmatised as bad. It is determined by our weaknesses as well as our strength. A large part of conduct consists of precautions which it is not only legitimate but incumbent to take, but which we should dispense with

under happier conditions. We cannot trust each other completely, and we lock our doors at night. 'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate. But they would not do so if there were no thievery in human nature. We are assured of our own good faith and of that of our customers, yet we think it business-like to ask and to give receipts of payment. And in a second way morality depends on 'badness,' for when a habit of action which we dislike and call bad comes to be strong enough to make itself felt, we seek to satisfy its claims as reasonable. There is, as will be explained later in greater detail, no external standard by which we can settle once and for all what claims are legitimate and what are not. We derive our conception of the reasonableness of things from our experience of their vitality and effective power. A wise man who thinks the feelings and beliefs of his neighbours ridiculous will by persuasion or force resist them with all his energies; but when he finds them persist in spite of all his efforts, he will recognise that there are more things in human nature than stir within the narrow limits of his own breast. If what we now call bad conduct, murder, adultery, theft, could be conceived to become predominant, under greatly changed and of course impossible conditions, it would cease to be bad, and would be the ideal of life.

17. In conclusion, I will notice two perversions of the doctrine that morality depends on a victory. The first concerns a practical question of conduct. If the good is the predominant ideal, it is natural to ask, how in a case of doubt should I act? Should I follow my conviction, or should I join the side which I think likely to prevail? The question depends on a false representation of the actual conditions under which a new ideal is introduced, and involves a fallacy of which we have already had an example. That the good is created by its predominance is a theory of the means by which moral ideals come into existence, but it is not a statement of the motive

of those who participate in the struggle. They act on motives supplied by their characters, and the struggle is a trial of the forces of whatever kind they bring to support their motives. It is not victory which is the end, but the assertion of certain principles. Some persons may be determined by the reflective motive of victory, but this is not true of most. So far as persons reflect at all, they act because they think their conduct best calculated to secure the interest or improvement of their society and themselves. There will be some whose convictions are determined by consideration of which side has the probable majority, and they too are among the forces which bring victory to that side. Their action is justifiable or not according as it is founded on a sincere desire to help on a movement which seems to be called for by the wishes of most, or is prompted by the mere selfish desire to be on the winning side. But to suppose that victory itself is the motive of conduct, and to ask therefore whether we *ought* to take the side which is likely to prevail, is an illegitimate inference from the theory, and is based upon abstracting the process from the end.

18. The theory of the survival of the fittest in human affairs is sometimes supposed to countenance abominable crimes. If a civilised nation in contact with an inferior people is likely to extirpate it, why not destroy them at once by any means, and spare them the struggle? A Brazilian is reported to have lately gained possession of an Indian village by secretly poisoning the wells. Whether the report is true or not I do not know; but the act was regarded as a fair conclusion from the theory of survival. But that theory sanctions no such interpretation, and it is worth while to point out the fallacies underlying the accusation. Partly there is the mistake just explained, that because a person is superior, he therefore *ought* to exterminate his inferiors, making victory a motive, and not some other object. But there are two additional misapprehensions of how morality grows.

The first is that victory in conduct means actual destruction of life, whereas it is a victory of ideals, and need shed no drop of blood. How far actual life needs to be destroyed is settled by the incidents of the struggle, but the struggle is conducted under certain conditions. This leads to the second point, that the parties to a struggle use only those means which their characters approve. The trial is not that of mere unlicensed brutality, but of the forces of character, and these imply all kinds of sentiments which limit the operations of mere brute force. A person who shows a superiority over others by enlisting cunning or even bravery in the service of an act which violates these sentiments is none the less guilty of a crime. The theory of survival sanctions no such infamies, any more than it would approve of the army of a European state if it deliberately fired upon the hospital or the cathedral of a besieged city.

II.—Interest and Morality.

19. The peculiar relation in which *interest* stands to morality arises out of the process by which right is distinguished from wrong. Interest or good in general is a different conception from the right or the morally good. Interest means what is good for an individual considered from his own point of view, and without regard to similar claims of other individuals. It is the maximum of happiness or satisfactions which he can secure under his conditions. By 'maximum happiness' is meant that distribution of satisfactions or of the energies which produce them, any deviation from which on either side implies a less fulness of life. Interest, though a different conception from right or goodness, is therefore a conception of the same rank or order. In the first place, interest is not mere momentary satisfaction, but implies a reference both forwards and backwards to the whole

range of a person's wants. It is something permanent, something which implies orderly arrangement. In the next place, though it represents the individual's good from his own point of view, it is not a good which is independent of other persons. Such an isolated individual has no real existence. On the contrary, a man's interest is mainly determined by the power which others have of rewarding or punishing him according as he falls in with or opposes their wishes. In other words, interest is not the same thing as a man's mere inclinations, supposing he were left to himself. In an inaccurate way we do sometimes use the idea thus, and we may then say that the interest of any organism is to do what it likes. But this would not correspond to the idea which is contrasted with right or goodness. If interest were merely to have one's likings gratified, the interest of the bad man would be to be bad. But it is expressly declared by our moral experience that the interest of the bad man is in general to be good.

20. What may be called the phenomena of interest have been already stated. As a general rule interest is in agreement with goodness. On the one hand, it is my interest to be moral: we have all tried it, not one of us but has found that his misdeeds are on the whole unprofitable. On the other hand, morality secures the individual's interest. If a person declares that he never acts for his own interest, we suspect his sincerity, and we hold in any case that he is talking cant; and it is cant too when we are blamed for seeking after our own interest when this coincides with the public good. Whether a man is good depends not on his avoiding his own interests, but upon what his interests are, and whether he pursues them disinterestedly, that is to say, as part of the moral code. But though there is this general agreement, there are undoubtedly some cases in which it is not to my interest to be good. This does not mean that a good man does not find his interest in

being good: it means only that supposing he were a different person, he might secure more happiness. The discrepancy of interest and right lies in the fact that there are certain persons under certain conditions who can get more happiness out of life by doing wrong than if they had been good men. They may do this though their misdeeds are known, and they may secure their interest most effectually of all if, being bad, they can get the credit of being good. These phenomena we have to explain.

21. The general identity of virtue and interest follows at once. Statically this identity means that morality is the reconciliation of diverse wants or 'interests' (to use the word in another sense); that it solves the problem how to satisfy these wants together. It does so by creating a new type of character which has wants of only certain kinds. Dynamically the identity represents the fact that forces are arrayed on the side of good which are too powerful for the bad. Good is the victorious ideal: it is my interest to be good because on account of the forces arrayed against badness I shall get less satisfaction out of my life if I am bad than if I am good. In the animal world the identity of interest and good is established by the extinction of those kinds of life which are different from the victorious species. In the end only the one kind remains, the others vanish. It would indeed appear absurd to hold that the interest of the beaten species is to give place to another and to die: but we are using language which is inappropriate where there is no choice. We must say that it is the interest of an animal in a species to belong to the victorious variety. On the other hand, it is to the interest of the bad man to be good, because he can become good: his bad ideal must die like the weaker animal variety, but he himself can become a good man by replacing it by the good ideal.

22. If good and interest are on the whole identical,

why distinguish between the two things? The main reason is that interest is not always identical with good, and is therefore a different and wider conception. But another reason for distinguishing them, even where they are identical, may be found in the following process. Before a man becomes good, we can think of a hypothetical interest which is different from morality. We can say of the weaker variety that its real interest could be found if the circumstances were such that it could maintain its existence. Of the bad man we can say that supposing the circumstances were favourable, his real interest would be to be bad. We can then add that interest and morality coincide because the hypothetical interests of the conquered varieties cannot be secured.

23. Let us now turn to the exceptional cases where interest does not coincide with morality, and first to those where the wrong-doing is overt and condemned. Wherever we have this discrepancy, it depends upon two different kinds of conditions, acting separately or conjointly. The first is the possession by the agent of a certain kind of disposition which renders him less sensitive to the forces which society can bring against him, or even contemptuous of them. Punishments and social censures are calculated from experience for the average wrong-doer. But there are some persons who do not feel them, or with whom they do not weigh against the profit of the wrong-doing: there are others, to take a less vulgar instance, who will feel the stings of conscience which represents the internal working of the social resistance to wrong, but may end by living down their remorse. A truly good man, just because he is good, would find a wrong act intolerable, and there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of persons who, in contemplating certain actions, declare they would never forgive themselves, or look others in the face again, if they performed them. But another might do the wrong and overlook the reproaches of

his fellows, and forget his own conscience. It argues a thick skin when a man can thus be comfortable under punishment.

The second kind of condition is the weakness of others. Partly this may be simply a relative inferiority on their side in strength or intelligence, or a relative superiority on the side of the wrong-doer; a man may attain power by unscrupulous means, attach others to his interest, and actually suppress by force the resistance of others. In other cases, and generally, it will be a moral weakness on the part of others which secures him his advantage. He succeeds because they are too careless of their social trust to punish him as he deserves. If a tradesman is known to make money by sharp practice, society has only itself to blame if it continues to deal with him or leaves him to enjoy his ill-gotten gains in peace. It is still more guilty if, forgetting his methods of acquisition, it goes on to pay him the court which great wealth usually receives. When it is worth a man's while to do wrong, the guilt lies as often with others as with himself.

Whatever the causes of this divergence of interest and virtue, we have in these exceptional cases the contradictory phenomenon that an ideal which can maintain its existence, and is therefore to the interest of the individual who acts by it, is yet declared to be bad, or a member of a vanishing variety. Such cases mark a stage of transition in the process by which the distinction of good or bad is established. The interested ideal is one which can hold its ground for a time because of the exceptional character of its possessor, or of the circumstances in which he finds himself. The analogy from natural organisms would be of the following kind. In any variety there may be here and there an exceptionally endowed individual which will maintain itself for a time against the attacks of its enemies while its fellows are being extirpated. The same result would follow where an

individual either has to struggle with the weaker members of the successful variety against which it might maintain itself for a time (these would correspond to the weak but not culpable persons whom an unscrupulous person silences or uses); or where its struggle is with the members of an intermediate variety closely allied to the successful one, but itself in the process of extirpation, corresponding to those persons who, by culpable weakness in resisting evil, render it possible for evil-doing to be really profitable.

24. The analogy is more striking and easier to point out in those cases of discrepancy between interest and morality where a man's interest can be shown to lie in doing wrong but seeming to be good. Such pretence of goodness is not hard to find: one need not even be a monster of crime to fall under the description: all persons come under it who do what is right, not for its own sake, but merely for fear of the consequences. Whenever such action is to the wrong-doer's interest, we have an ideal which profits a person because it simulates the good and successful ideal. This simulation or imitation is not uncommon amongst animal species. An instance which is quoted by Darwin [1] is that of a butterfly, Leptalis, which mingles among the swarms of another species, the Ithomia, in certain districts of South America. Some of the mocking insects belong to distinct species, but "many of the mimicking forms of the Leptalis, as well as of the mimicked forms, can be shown by a graduated series to be merely varieties of the same species," just as the seeming good man will either vary exceedingly from the accepted code and trust to skilfulness in concealment, or may deviate only slightly, and more easily get credit for being good. It is noticeable, too, that just as the moral cases we are discussing are exceptional, so the "mockers are almost invariably rare insects, while the mocked abound in swarms."

[1] *Origin of Species*, ch. xiv. p. 375 (6th edit.).

25. Stated generally, the reason for imitation is that it serves to secure for the alien variety the same advantages as the variety it imitates. The good ideal is that which maintains itself under its conditions, whatever those conditions may be. In the instance of imitation cited from the animal world, the advantage to the mimicking insect is that it escapes destruction by a higher type of animal, birds, to which the insects it imitates are distasteful. But security from destruction by a higher type is only one form of the advantages of successful species. Amongst men, the commonest cases of interest are those in which a bad man imitates a good in order to save himself from being punished by the good themselves, by the type he imitates. But this is a phenomenon of the same kind, and instances will show the gradations which lead up to it. When the Gibeonites came to Joshua, with old sacks on their asses, and old and patched-up shoes upon their feet, and old garments upon themselves, and the bread of their provision dry and mouldy, pretending to come from a far-off country, they imitated those tribes which the conquering people were content to let alone. They offer an exact parallel to the action of the Leptalis in imitating the Ithomia. Another example is like this, but stands nearer to the ordinary motive for pretending to be good. A prisoner who is ill is treated with care and relieved of punishment for the time: society lets him be. But another may seek to save himself from punishment by malingering and imitating the sick prisoner; and if he can cheat the prison doctor, it is to his interest. Lastly, all reference to a type higher than that of both the imitated and the imitator disappears, and thus a bad man puts on the appearance of being good in order, while he pursues his own schemes, to have the forces of society upon his side.

CHAPTER III.

THE MAINTENANCE OF MORAL IDEALS.

I.—Punishment.

1. (*a.*) *Moral Sanctions.*—There are two ways in which the moral ideal is maintained—by *education* and by *punishment*. Both of these are forms of moral discipline, but they operate differently. In education we raise the individual from a lower to a higher place within the society itself. By punishment we enforce the ideal against the resistance of the wrong-doer. The process of education, and other cognate processes which are the means of individual progress, I will take later, for they concern growth within the sphere of goodness. At present I will deal with the institution of punishment, by which good endeavours to enforce its victory over evil through suffering inflicted upon those who offend against the law.

Punishment as a moral institution is the condemnation of wrong-doing, which either is effected by simple moral censure, or, in cases where it is found necessary, is enforced by legal penalties. The unpleasant consequences of imprudence, like the indigestion or headache which follows upon a debauch, are not punishment in the proper sense; and we have a moral censure for such sins in addition to the natural pains they bring upon the wrong-doer. But punishment is as natural a result of wrong-doing as a cold is of sitting in wet shoes. It is the reaction of the good forces of society against the evil. Accordingly, it is something which grows and

exists with morality itself, and is a necessary incident of the predominance of the ideal.

2. But though punishment comes into existence with morality, it does not constitute morality. Morality means a code of conduct which formulates the social equilibrium. But in its birth it creates a distinction between good and bad, which finds effective expression in punishment. Here we have at once the significance and the defects of the traditional English doctrine of the moral sanctions, according to which morality is conformity to a law to which penalties are attached by the lawgiver, whether that lawgiver is society, or the law of the land, or God. As a description of the growth of morality, the doctrine is strictly true. Morality *is* conduct which is enforced by punishments or by rewards. If you wish to know whether conduct is wrong, find out whether blame attaches to it. The doctrine fails of representing the whole truth, because it puts a necessary incident in the place of the essence. It makes morality dependent on punishment instead of the reverse. The reason of this mistake lies in the atomistic conception of society, which leaves the individuals accessible to the moral law only through the external infliction of pain. In this way morality comes to bear in the theory the aspect of an artificial product instead of being a growth. It seems to be imposed by a superior force. When once we recognise the social character of the individual and his growth along with the growth of society, we see how every law impressed from above is nothing more than an expression of the will of the whole society, it may be through the medium of the king or of the priest whom the society obeys. Morality and punishment thus appear in their true relation. The penalties imposed by the lawgiver take the form of conscious enactment, because they are the reaction of conscious persons. It is strange that Bentham, who introduced the physical sanction into the circle of authorities, did not perceive its

bearing upon his theory. If he had conceived of it as the necessary reaction of nature upon those who violate her laws, he would have seen that all other punishments are equally incidents in the victory of right over wrong, but do not account for the real nature of the distinction itself.

3. Accordingly, if the question, 'what is the moral sanction?' means 'what reason is there why morality exists?' the answer lies not in enumerating the penalties of wrong-doing, but in tracing the origin of morality as an equilibrium of the forces of society. We are moral because morality represents our strivings as organised under our conditions. All supposed ulterior reasons of pleasure and avoidance of pain are comprised within good conduct itself. The pleasures we seek are those which are connected with good conduct; the pains we avoid are those which accrue to us from the reaction of the moral ideal upon its assailants.

But the question, 'why should I be moral?' means most naturally and usually, what inducements are there to me to do right? Given a particular man, why should he not pursue his interest rather than morality? The answer, as we have already seen, must be different for different persons. To the wicked the pains and penalties of wrong-doing may be a sufficient deterrent, and the sanctions have their value in this connection. But to a good man they will make no appeal. The only sanction which will induce him to be moral is to reflect upon the unhappiness produced by the wrong act, an unhappiness which means the thwarting of good character and the violation of rights. This intrinsic unhappiness will be reproduced in the disapprobation of his own conscience. It is right to shrink from the pains of conscience, and these are the only personal pains from which a good man will shrink. But whether, in thinking of the consequences of an act, we think of its bad effect upon character, or whether we seek after the appro-

bation and shrink from the stings of our own conscience, will depend upon the temperament. Both are intrinsic inducements to morality: though there are practical dangers connected with the reference to the personal pleasures and pains of conscience, the dangers of spiritual pride and of morbid introspection, which make the contemplation of the objective consequences the more serviceable rule of life.

The approbation and disapprobation of conscience are felt as the pleasures and pains of the idea of an action, and they stand on a different footing from mere rewards or punishments. They are inducements felt at the moment, and are different from the prospective pleasures of approbation and the prospective pains of remorse. These prospective pains are punishments which ensue upon the performance of the act, and though they are internal, not external, the man who does right because he shrinks from them is not a good man. He is intermediate between the bad man who seeks only to escape legal punishment, and the good man whose pains of conscience felt at the idea of a wrong act prevent his performing it.[1]

4. (*b.*) *Nature of Punishment.* — What, then, is the nature of punishment? Is it retributive, as might be supposed from describing it as the reaction of the good against the evil, or is its real character preventive, or reformatory? It appears to me that punishment wears these different shapes in turn according to the point of view from which it is regarded, but that in the distinc-

[1] We must distinguish such cases of doing right merely through shrinking from remorse, which means a moral defect, from certain morbid cases of men who shrink from any action from fear of their future feelings. A man might beg to be released from serving as a juryman because the prospect of what he would suffer, whichever way he decided, would render him unable to decide. Such a man might be a good man, and he would have shown his honesty by declaring himself unfit for the office; though of course such morbid nervousness would constitute a painful impediment upon him through the whole of his life. (See, on the subject of the paragraph, the discussion of prospective pleasures and pains in Bk. II. ch. v. pp. 219–222.)

tively moral view it is reformatory. Both in Aristotle's and Plato's conception of punishment, it is remarkable that retribution is almost entirely absent. They regarded punishment as either reformatory and curative or as deterrent, and to the former character they assigned the greater importance. They think of it as a medicine to purge the soul of wickedness. Doubtless, the notion of retribution we owe to religious conceptions, and it is emphasised to-day by the analogy of the animal world, where species maintain themselves by self-assertion. But the Greeks were, as I think, guided by a right instinct in their preference for the idea of reformation, which not only includes the other two conceptions, but is what we should expect if we rightly interpret the analogy of the lower animals.

5. That all punishment is retribution is strictly true. The word 'retribution' is unfortunate, for it suggests the idea of private vengeance, which is so far from being punishment, that punishment supersedes it. Sir Henry Maine has pointed out how the earliest forms of punishment represent an outsider of accepted character interposing between the wrong-doer and the summary vengeance of the offended party.[1] The interval between private vengeance and punishment can be filled up so as to show the transition. In Lynch law we have a summary act, which, though springing from the sentiment of vindictiveness, is the act of a whole community. The September massacres were ordered by the Government, and so far had a social authority, but were vindictive in so far as they were used to serve a personal grudge against rivals. Both these acts are unlawful punishment in a settled state of society.

But in true punishment we avenge the moral law, not from personal feelings of vindictiveness, but as representing something which is the life of society. Every wrong is a crime of *lèse majesté* against the moral ideal,

[1] *Ancient Law*, chap. x.

which recoils upon the offender in the form of pains and penalties. He has set up for himself a law different from that of the society, and he must take the consequences. The law he has outraged asserts itself against him, and he is made to feel that he has done wrong, and to expiate his offence. The death penalty, which leaves no chance of a changed life, is thought to be the strongest testimony in favour of this view that punishment has a function in itself of giving the offender what he deserves.

6. In spite of the high authority which supports this view, there is something in the idea of retribution which is repugnant to the moral sense. The repugnance does not disappear on reflecting that public vengeance is different from private, and it inclines us to the belief that the idea of retribution is misleading. The value of the theory lies in its placing human punishment on a line with the process of self-assertion by which species maintain their life. The human institution of punishment is comprised under the wider law of nature, of the reaction of an organism against anything which impedes its vitality. From this comprehensive point of view punishment therefore is retributive. Men do like the rest of the world. But though it is true to say punishment avenges the evil deed, if we go on to say that we punish for the sake of vengeance, or that punishment is its own end, we are not only stating something repulsive in itself, but are guilty of positive confusion.

Punishment is vengeance, but it is not inflicted for the sake of vengeance. We must distinguish what is true of punishment from the purpose which is in our minds when we punish. It is only when we take the latter point of view that we can understand completely the nature of the institution. The theory of punishment for its own sake confuses a fact which is true of punishment, or what is true from the spectator's point of view, with the purpose of punishment, or what is true from the agent's point of view. It puts man under the same law as

the animal world, without doing justice to the especial characteristic of human action, that it not only follows a plan, but is done with a purpose. And it does not represent truly the analogy of human and animal phenomena.

7. The object of punishment may be considered in a double light. If we take the juridical view, its object is to deter the criminal himself and others. This arises from the very nature of legal administration, which requires only that an act should be done, and does not ask whether it is done for its own sake or from some other motive. All that the law can do, therefore, is to affix some penalty which shall secure the non-violation of the law. Accordingly, the legislator, in estimating the amount of punishment required to enforce a new law, asks how much is needed to prevent the performance of the wrong act. Thus in all punishment prevention is implied as one of its objects, but it occupies a subordinate place. It is not as moral that punishment is preventive, but only as the means of securing the performance of right action, irrespective of the character of the agent. Legal punishment is preventive and nothing more (and here again we are taking up the position of the great Greek philosophers); for however much the legislation may have a moral object, the administration of the law cannot concern itself with the inner character of the subjects.

8. When we leave the jural for the moral point of view, the purpose of punishment is seen to be reformation. The processes of the animal world bear out this conclusion. Punishment in man corresponds to the struggle of the dominant variety with other varieties. If we could personify nature, and ask with what purpose the struggle of species takes place, the answer is that nature tries to extirpate offending individuals. In morality, in like manner, we punish in order to extirpate ideals which offend the dominant or general ideal. But in nature conflict means the extinction of individual animals: in

punishment, it is sufficient that the false ideal is extinguished, and it is not necessary always that the person himself should be destroyed. We punish for vice; but vice, as Plato remarked, does not attack the body, but the soul. If it destroyed the body, he quaintly says, there would be no need of the executioner. The pains of punishment are thus only those which attend the conflict of the victorious ideal with the evil, and punishment is a continuation of the process whereby the ideal secures its predominance. It seeks to put new sentiments in place of the old, driving the bad ideal out of the wrong-doer's mind by bringing home to him the right. So far as it operates not only on the wrong-doer himself but on others, its object is once more to make them better by bringing home to their minds the wrongfulness of evil-doing. In some cases the wrong-doer's mind is so perverted that only loss of his life (at least in the judgment of society) will suffice. Here, too, paradoxical as it may seem, though perhaps the chief object of our punishment is the indirect one of bettering others, we punish with death in order to make him a good man and to bring him within the ideal of society. It is true that we give him no chance of showing his reformation by a further usefulness, but the penalty of death is thought necessary to bring home to him the enormity of his guilt. The offices of religion are used in our own day for the same end of true penitence, a result which is only truly achieved when the criminal has come to regard his death as his proper fate, as the act which seals his conciliation with society.

9. It matters not that the purpose of punishment is not always achieved: neither as a preventive nor as a cure is punishment completely effective; nor, it must be added, is it always truly retributive either, because the effect of the pain on the criminal is not the same as was intended. But the same thing is true of all conduct: we never obtain in reality exactly what we design, but always something more or something less. The moral character of punish-

ment, however, as of all conduct, lies in its conscious object. On the other hand, the purpose of punishment is on the whole achieved; for it is the means by which wickedness is suppressed, and it is ridiculous to suppose that wickedness does in fact occupy a considerable space in the life of a society. There is always too much of it; but it seems so disproportionately great because it is salient and interesting. Whereas the greater part of life consists of respectability, and respectability is uninteresting and does not figure in the newspapers.

In the perpetual struggle between good and evil, punishment is thus a contrivance to win over the bad to the side of the good. Though it means indignation against wrong, it means care for the welfare of actual or possible wrong-doers. "And if the magistrate," said Cromwell in one of his speeches, "by punishing visible miscarriages save them [*i.e.*, men] by that discipline, God having ordained him for that end, I hope it will evidence *love* and not hate so to punish where there is cause."[1] Hence, too, the profound truth of Plato's paradox in the *Gorgias*, that it is better for a man to be punished than to escape. It saves him from a worse punishment in the degradation of his character—a punishment worse than imprisonment or even than death. Only after very careful consideration and with the conviction of its wisdom could a man dare to leave his fellow to so cruel a retribution. One of the tests of friendship is accordingly that a man be not afraid, at the cost of whatever personal suffering, to warn his friend of a sin.

10. In speaking of punishment as reconciling the criminal with society, I have indicated how the idea of reformation, while explaining the purpose of punishment, also includes the aspect of retribution or expiation under which punishment may be viewed from without. In reformation the wrong-doer joins once more the society from which he has revolted: by his suffering he expiates

[1] Carlyle's *Cromwell*, vol. iv. p. 29 (popular edition), Speech ii.

his wrong, and appeases the rightful indignation of the law which he has transgressed. The actual suffering may be all that is actually achieved by the punishment; but though failing to effect reformation, it is always at reformation that it aims.[1] It is only when the suffering is attended by reformation that it can be considered as in a proper sense expiation or atonement. Suffering is thus the medium which is to purify the character and expiate the wrong. Primitive times dispense with the suffering and admit the wrong-doer to society by a mere symbolic act of purification. Just as they confuse with criminality a mere event that may happen to a person, though that event may not have issued from the character at all,[2] so they consider that a wilful murderer like Herakles has expiated his wrong when he has found some friendly king to wash him clean of his sin.

Punishment has, therefore, all three characters: it is retributive in so far as it falls under the general law that resistance to the dominant type recoils upon the resistent or guilty creature: it is preventive in so far as, being a statutory enactment, it aims at securing the maintenance of the law irrespective of the individual's character. But this latter characteristic is secondary, and the former is comprehended under the third idea, that of reformation, which is the superior form under which retribution appears when the type is a mental ideal and is effected by conscious persons.

II.—Responsibility.

11. Intimately connected with punishment is the conception of *responsibility*, which differs from obligation by the introduction of this other element. The obligation to good conduct is the necessity of performing it which

[1] Wundt's *Ethik* has given me help here (Abschn. iii. c. iii. pp. 454–462). Prof. Wundt takes, however, a different view of the relative value of the different elements in punishment.

[2] See before, Bk. I. ch. i. sec. ii. p. 31

arises out of the relation of the act to the order of which it forms a part. Responsibility is the negative aspect of this relation. When I think of conduct as required of me, I think of it as my duty; when I think of it as conduct which if I do not perform I shall be rightly punished, I have the sense of responsibility. There is always this negative idea contained in responsibility, though the term is used loosely like the names of all our moral conceptions. Thus we sometimes say we are answerable for doing rightly when we mean little more than that it is our duty, or in saying that we accept the responsibility of an action we may be only expressing more or less pompously our conviction that the action is right. But strictly examined, our acceptance of responsibility always implies that we are prepared to acquiesce in punishment if our act is wrong.

The sense of responsibility is therefore, I think, rightly described by Mill as the knowledge that if we do wrong we shall deserve punishment, or, as I prefer to say, the knowledge that the *law* requires such and such conduct, and punishment therefore falls upon us if we transgress. It is accordingly only so far as we have law-abiding instincts that we feel the sense of responsibility at all, and different persons feel it differently according as they think of the authority of the law as derived from its mere enactment or as founded upon the social good, or as established in their own conscience and self-respect, which represent the social good. Implying the recognition of certain conduct as right, the sense of responsibility differs from the mere fear of punishment, which may be sufficient to deter a bad man, and is utilised for that reason by the civil law. The fear of punishment prevents the commission of wrong, but the man who acts from it does not act from a sense of responsibility.

12. The mere knowledge that I shall be punished is different, therefore, from the feeling of responsibility. It is only those who can appreciate that punishment will

be deserved to whom the idea of responsibility applies. There is, therefore, no difference between the fact of responsibility and the sense of responsibility, any more than there is between goodness and the feeling of approbation, or duty and the sense of duty.[1] When we declare a bad man responsible, we mean that the good man holds him to be justly punished. His responsibility lies in a feeling not on his own part, but on the part of the good, just as the badness of his action consists in the good man's disapprobation. This does not of course warrant the absurd conclusion that no one is responsible unless he feels so. Every man is responsible whether good or bad, but the responsibility lies always in a feeling felt by the good. To the bad man his responsibility is present only as the mere theoretical knowledge that the good man will hold him to deserve the punishment he will get.

13. On what, then, does responsibility depend? It depends on two things. First, that a man is capable of being influenced by what is right, that he can feel the force of goodness; and second, that whatever he does is determined by his character.

The first consideration is plain. If a man were incapable of being affected by moral considerations, we could not justly punish him: we might inflict pain upon him in order to terrorise him, or we might imprison him, as we do a lunatic, or get rid of him; but we should not hold him responsible. We punish a man because he is acted upon by all the institutions of the society in which he lives, and is capable of feeling moral distinctions: that is, he has the capacity of being determined to action by the recognition of laws as constituting social good, and of choice between such laws and his lower impulses. The object of punishment is to make this mere capacity something actual, so that upon occasion he will choose the right. Every man acts according to his

[1] See before, Book II. ch. iii. p. 150.

nature, but in doing so he comes into collision with the forces which require goodness, and is responsible in so far as he fails of appreciating them.

It is in virtue of this capacity, depending as it does upon his being aware of the meaning of his acts, and consequently of their connection with other acts, that a man's relation to his society contains an element which is not present in the relation of an animal to the other varieties with which it contends. The animal acts according to its kind, and if it cannot cope with the other varieties, it is killed. Man acts according to his nature, but he is responsible, because he can become one of the dominant variety through becoming aware of what the moral ideal is. In doing so, his former ideal is exterminated, but not himself. It is because the mind can be improved by a new ideal, while the animal cannot, that we have in the latter case only the alternative of life or destruction, while in the former we have the alternative of being in the right or being responsible for the wrong. The relation of ideals is the same as that of the varieties, but a man is more than his present ideal, and can gain a fresh one.

14. *Free-will.*—The assertion that every man acts according to his character raises the question of *free-will*. I have not hitherto discussed the question, and can only treat it summarily now. There is the less reason for any lengthy discussion because, except for the authority of one or two great names,[1] there seems to be a general agreement that the will is determined by character and circumstances. If character means the principle of volition, as I have taken moral character to be, the assertion is a truism. It is no less true if we use character in the wider sense as disposition. The belief in its truth rests partly on a familiar experience of human life, partly on

[1] *E.g.*, Lotze (*Outlines of Practical Philosophy*, chap. iii.), and Dr. Martineau.

a ground of probability. It is, in the first place, the assumption upon which all social intercourse proceeds: we could not deal with our fellow-men unless we could reckon on their acting according to their character. The argument from probability is the *à priori* prepossession in favour of the same rule obtaining in minds, or in human affairs, as obtains throughout the whole remainder of creation. If these evidences in favour of what is called determinism are so strong, the differences of view between determinists themselves do not concern the truth of action following from character and circumstances combined, but concern fundamental metaphysical questions as to the nature of the mind—whether, that is, the mind or self is a series of events, or a self-conscious subject, or neither.[1] But this is a question which does not belong to ethics at all, and does not affect the truth of the proposition under consideration.

15. On the other hand, the notion of a free-will in the sense of an undetermined will, the idea of the existence of a mysterious power latent in the will which

[1] Though it would be out of place in the text, I may observe, in a note, that we cannot distinguish human action from other kinds of causation as being self-determined in the sense that the process of willing goes on wholly within the human mind; that nothing can affect the mind's action except so far as it becomes a motive, and that a man acts thus from his own nature. (The distinction is thus represented by T. H. Green.) For the same thing, stated generally, is true of all action, even in the inanimate world. All action is a joint result of the nature of the thing affected and that which affects it. Scratch a diamond with a piece of quartz, and you make no impression: scratch the quartz with the diamond, and the quartz yields. When a cannon-ball goes through a wall, it is because the wall is of such a nature as to yield to the stroke. All action is in this sense equally self-determination and equally compulsion. The difference between human and other action lies not in some special character of the mind's unity, but in the higher development of the mental states. The mind in willing is aware of what affects it: the wall is not. But this difference does not invalidate causation; it only shows that here we have causation working in a different subject. The consciousness which makes such a difference to human action, and on account of which human action is justly described as self-determination, is something merely phenomenal, not something which puts an absolute barrier between it and other action. This may be verified by depriving a man of consciousness, as by stunning him. He then acts just like a stone, resisting by mere dead weight any attempt to carry him off.

can act independently of motive, appeals in its turn to certain obvious and vital phenomena. One of these phenomena has been already referred to,[1] and will be noticed again,[2]—the emergence of new sentiments in the character. The others are the fact of responsibility, and the testimony of our minds which gives us the consciousness of freedom. How could these things be if the will was determined? But the idea of such a free-will is, I believe, a sheer delusion, and the very facts to which it appeals point to the opposite conclusion. The emergence of new sentiments may be dismissed in a few words. It is only unaccountable before the event; after the event it is accountable. It is an ordinary incident in the growth of character, no more indeterminate than the appearance of leaf-buds on the branches in the spring-time. To turn to responsibility: though invented to save responsibility, free-will renders it inexplicable; a will independent of motives could never be responsible, because it could not be called to account: it would be senseless to hold a man to account when our action in doing so could not be reckoned to have any effect upon him.

16. But if the will is always determined, the necessary resultant of character and occasion, how then can the consciousness of freedom arise? Now the consciousness of freedom takes different forms, but, in so far as it can be used as evidence on behalf of an indeterminate will, it is the feeling that we can take either of two courses before us (*e.g.*, do or omit something), and that, whichever we will to do, we will freely. I say, in so far as it can be used in evidence on the question at issue, for some forms of the consciousness of freedom are not relevant. Sometimes that consciousness is nothing more than the feeling that there is no compulsion to prevent me from carrying my will into effect. But whether I effect my will or not, I can still will. Sometimes it may

[1] See above, Book III. ch. i. p. 287. [2] See below, Section iii. p. 346.

be the feeling that there was no compulsion upon me so great as to prevent my willing. But to say that the will is free in this sense is a bare tautology; for the only compulsion which prevents my willing is the compulsion which paralyses my will altogether. All other compulsion leaves me still free to will, and is only an inducement considered as having force upon me. But an act to which we are thus compelled is a free act. Though compulsion is a name properly applied to inducements which come mainly from the outside, yet any motive, whether it comes from within or without, has force, and is so far compulsory. Compulsion, then, does not affect the question, for it either leaves the will free or destroys it altogether. The consciousness of freedom in the proper sense is the consciousness that, whatever inducements there are, we will freely.

17. How, then, does this consciousness of freedom arise? Freedom is, I answer, an undoubted property of the will, which consists simply in the fact of choice. Given two motives, it is an undoubted fact that the will does choose between them. The consciousness of freedom is nothing more than the consciousness that I choose between two motives. This fact of choice and consciousness of choosing depends upon the fundamental property of volition that the object willed is present to consciousness: in deliberate choice two objects being present to the mind at once. So far is the consciousness of freedom from being a ground for assuming an arbitrary or undetermined power of volition, that it is exactly what would be expected to accompany the process of determination when the object concerned was a conscious mind. Pull a body to the right with a force of twelve pounds, and to the left with a force of eight; it moves to the right. Imagine that body a mind aware of the forces which act upon it; it will move in the direction of that which, for whatever reason, appeals to it most; and in doing so it will, just because it is conscious, act of itself,

and will have the consciousness of freedom. A true explanation of this consciousness turns the flank of indeterminism.

The power of choice by which free-will is directed is, therefore, merely a phenomenon of will, and not an unexplained power incompatible with determination. Which motive is chosen is perfectly fixed and dependent upon the character, which cannot choose otherwise than it does. We cannot, therefore, go behind the act of choice, and say that there was a freedom of choice in this sense, as if we might have chosen otherwise. The freedom of choice lies *in* the choice itself.

18. Where the consciousness of freedom contains, or is supposed to contain, more than this, to be the feeling that, whatever I actually do, I was free to do otherwise, this belief depends on an illusion either on the part of the agent or of his interpreters. Given any action, a different action is conceivable: there is a logical alternative to everything. But so far as the agent believes that *he*, with his character and under his circumstances, could have acted otherwise, he confuses the feeling that he chooses with this merely logical possibility. Supposing the illusion not to be in his own mind at all, it belongs to the philosopher, who, on the ground of this confusion, misinterprets the ordinary consciousness of choosing.

There is, however, a third form of the consciousness of freedom, which is not, properly speaking, evidence on the question at issue. When, having yielded to a passion, a man admits that he was free to have acted otherwise, his consciousness of freedom is the consciousness that he *ought* to have acted otherwise. Freedom in this sense is the positive freedom which is equivalent to morality. Freedom and unfreedom constitute an antithesis within the sphere of free choice. Every man acts freely when he chooses, but only he is truly free who chooses the right. But just as from the freedom which consists in choosing we cannot infer goodness, neither from the possi-

bility of goodness can we infer any freedom to choose. Every man is free in the sense that he ought to be good; but he is not therefore free to be good—he is free to be good, in common parlance, only *if he chooses.* On the contrary, just because his choice is determined by his character, is it of such vital importance for him so to educate his feelings that he will always choose the good rather than the bad.

19. Punishment, and with it responsibility, would be unmeaning except for the fact that, in face of institutions which demand from him a certain course of conduct, an agent, in virtue of his character, pursues a different course. This truth is misconceived when it is asserted that a man cannot be held responsible if he could not help his action. Plainly this goes too far, for it would put the good man in the same positi n as the bad. But indeed it is evident that the assertion assumes responsibility to be something over and above the relation in which a man in virtue of his choice stands to the moral law when he contemplates the possibility of transgressing it, and it supposes responsibility to be something unaccountable. But in reality it is just because a man cannot, in the vulgar sense of the word, help doing[1] what he does that he is responsible. His character is vitiated, and he is condemned for it.

We cannot deny that there is a rigour and an appearance of cruelty in the moral condemnation which is passed upon a man when all that he does is to follow his bent. How much criminality cannot be traced to the mere absence of education or to the influence of depraved surroundings in moulding the character? In how many cases is not the difference between a respectable man and a villain made by weaknesses of temperament which the individual has brought with him into the

[1] Of course there is a sense in which sometimes a man cannot help doing what he does, when his will is forced; but then he is not held responsible.

world? A little stronger will and he might have been a decent member of society. And there is, I think, found along with the moral indignation against wrong a sentiment of pity for the wrong-doer, that he should be such as to commit the crime.

But the rigour of the moral judgment is but the repetition of the general law of nature, in virtue of which suffering is inflicted upon the organisms which are not suited to the conditions under which they have to live. To approve a criminal would be a contradiction in terms. Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill. But the cruelty of the moral judgment is in reality kindness; for, bringing home to a man the sense of his wrong-doing, it enables him to make use of the advantage he possesses over the lower animals, that he can change his ideal without losing his life.

The real significance of the doubts which are so strongly felt at the present day as to the lawfulness of punishment lies not in the fact of responsibility itself, but in the distribution of responsibility. It concerns a practical, not a theoretical question. A man brought up in criminal surroundings takes to burglary as a duck takes to the water: he is responsible for his thefts, but the responsibility is divided between himself and those who failed to give him ideas of right and wrong. Practically, it becomes the duty of society to see that the temptations to vice are removed from its members as far as possible. And in proportion as it has neglected this duty will be the vividness of the feeling that a particular criminal is suffering for the sins of others as well as his own.

III.—EDUCATION.

20. Punishment is the means by which the moral ideal is defended against its enemies. There is a second process upon which its maintenance depends, which is

positive in character and raises the members of the social order to the level of the requirements made upon them. Admitted within the circle of moral institutions, the individual has to advance from a lower stage, in which his duties are limited, to a higher, in which they are fuller. This is that individual progress included within each definite moral ideal without reference to any change in the ideal itself. It is plainest in the ordinary education of children, where the moral ideal operates upon the young mind through the authority of the parent or teacher. The period of infancy once past, the child enters as a member into the moral order and has its duties, though the demands made upon it are very restricted. But what is sufficient for the child is not sufficient for the grown man, in whose case the process is not so much one of discipline and instruction as of self-education. The grown man who has abandoned a bad life and is bent on reform is a child in respect of his having to begin at the beginning, but he is different from the child because of his power of independent observation and judgment, acquired through his experience. This is, however, not the general case of self-education, which is that of a man learning the range of his powers by experience of life, and again, as he passes his prime, learning to adapt himself to the limitations of his declining years. The process is one and the same in character in all cases, though, whereas in the education of the young the centre of authority is without, in the adult it is shifted to within. All individual progress may therefore properly be grouped under the name of education. I will first shortly describe it as a psychological process, and afterwards return to discuss its moral character and its connection with the change of moral ideals.

21. Psychologically the process of education may be represented as a gradual modification of the inclinations into congruity with moral ideas. It takes effect with cumulative force; every repetition of an action moulds

the inclination in the given direction, and at the same time by modifying it prepares it for a further advance. Hence there is a double movement—one towards strengthening the tendency to good conduct, the other towards a refinement of the conduct itself; and the different parts of the process are of course effected separately or in combination according to the judgment of the educator, or to that of the person who is educating himself. The need of refinement of conduct arises because some advance has already been made in it; new circumstances arise as the life of the child or the individual proceeds, which call for a modification of previous actions, where a repetition of the same act would be a mere hardening of the character. Something of the following sort appears to happen in the person's mind. A natural inclination arises, and it is brought into contact with the idea of something to be done, which requires that the feeling be modified before it is allowed to pass into action, this idea being supplied either by the educator or the person himself. When the inclination occurs again under similar circumstances, it more easily falls into the condition which is necessary for its use in conduct. New circumstances may require the inclination so moulded to be again transformed. It is in this way that the moral sentiments arise and acquire increasing sensitiveness.

22. This history presents itself under two forms—a negative and positive. The inclination may be confronted and opposed by the moral idea. In the child the will of the parent takes the place of the moral conscious idea, and his authority is sufficient to make it effective. In the grown man we have the struggle between his natural prompting and the idea of the right conduct. But this opposition is not always repeated, and in some natures it is unnecessary; for after a time the natural inclinations acquire a tendency in the forward direction of right conduct, moving, it is to be remembered, towards a course of conduct which, for the most part, has been found by

mankind, through experience, to be most suitable. Moreover, in many cases there is a predisposition towards that development of will which makes up morality: natural affection, for instance, disposes the child to follow the wishes of its parents; and in the case of the ordinary full-grown man, carrying on the process begun in childhood, the moralised inclinations have acquired enough momentum to carry him through new difficulties without strain. In the case supposed of a person reforming, the sentiments have often become enough reconstituted, at the time his reformation began, to produce the same effect. Whatever, then, the method, the result is that the natural inclinations become at the moment of their appearance spontaneously adjusted to the rest of the person's character. They both recur naturally in a more moralised form, and when they do not, they are at once tempered and checked by the rest of the character, so as to become available for moral action.

23. Two remarks may be added. The process of refinement of conduct and of sentiments is sometimes described as a growth in the purity of motive. But after previous discussion it will be plain that such a growth is included under the refinement of conduct. If I learn to do a thing with a purer motive, I have really learnt to do a different kind of action.[1] And in the next place, it is to be observed that the sentiments are not simultaneous in their production, for not only do they appear in modified forms according to occasions which call them forth, but sometimes entirely unsuspected ones appear. New elements of character are evoked to suit enlarged requirements of action, partly, I suppose, through the pressure of the character as already developed on the latent conditions upon which all character is based. A new and even slight circumstance may so dislocate the proportions in which sentiments exist in a man's mind, as to begin for him a new moral history and

[1] See above, Book I. ch. ii. pp. 45–6, and pp. 51–2.

a changed character. And this may happen not only in so-called conversions from a bad life, but in the course of a good life. This evoking of new elements of character, and the changes which thus occur, seem largely responsible for the idea of that mysterious power of freedom which attaches to human action; and partly on such phenomena as these reposes the habit we have of attributing to the mind some unaccountable agency, utterly unlike anything else in the world. The feeling of spontaneity which accompanies the process helps out this illusion. There is, however, as has been before observed, nothing in these facts which is essentially different from the most ordinary experiences of our volition; they are the natural development of character, and there is no greater freedom involved in them than belongs to every act of choice.

24. One form in which the individual or subjective progress occurs, though it has been mentioned before, is important enough to be specially described: the progress of a man who is compelled, in order to keep himself good, to subdue a strong rebellious passion. Such a man, as we have seen, is not the less good for his struggles, though we regard him as so far less fortunate than the man whose passions either never were very strong, or have easily been reduced into natural and spontaneous conformity with the law. Some persons even would think him better, or at any rate more meritorious. The progress in this case is towards greater ease of action; he has formed a habit of right action in those cases no less than the ordinary man, only each time the act requires self-compulsion. Whereas in the ordinary man, say the ordinary temperate man, the desire for drink naturally falls into line with the other sentiments; with him, before he can do right, his inclination has to be opposed by the suitable moral idea, backed by the rest of his moral sentiments. By this continual process he may come in the end to render his good habit a matter of less

pain and struggle, but he does not thereby advance in goodness, but in perfection. What morality requires is that the moral sentiment should predominate; with him it predominates through a victory. Doubtless such predominance is only possible through the moral momentum of the rest of his character; for a man exposed on many sides of his nature to anti-moral inclinations could hardly endure the trial. And indeed we often ascribe good actions at a new or unforeseen crisis to the weight of good habits already acquired.

25. Returning from this psychological history, let us inquire into the meaning of education for morality. The ordinary education of children is a method by which they are placed in possession of their heritage of moral capabilities. They are born into a society of men whose system of conduct represents the results hitherto achieved in the effort after the greater perfection of human character, and arrived at by them and their ancestors through a long course of moral experience. This order exists, and the child, though he becomes a member of it as soon as he is capable of making moral distinctions, is only an imperfect member. Education, accordingly, presents itself under a double aspect. It has, in the first place, to put the new member of society in possession of the present moral achievement—to make him, in fact, a capable citizen. But in the next place, it has to make him an *independent* individual, so to penetrate him with this moral order that it shall appear in him as his spontaneous character, modified to suit his particular condition, and endowed with that plasticity which arises only from full and free possession of moral capacities.

This independence is not something anterior to education, but is actually secured by it. Accordingly, it is impossible to agree with that sceptical or cynical doctrine which treats education as an institution designed by society for protection against the new generation, who might otherwise break the fabric down. That doctrine

rests partly on the same fictitious idea of an individual as independent of others which led to the theory of a social contract. But from his birth onwards the human person himself clings for support to society, and society throws its arms about him. Partly there is the prejudice that morality is something repugnant to the inclination, instead of being the positive goal to which man, taken in his social connexion, naturally and necessarily moves.

Education liberates. Moral education rests on the same basis as education in knowledge, which, besides putting the young into his intellectual heritage, enables him to think for himself. It effects this end by a process of familiarisation. The mind imbibes insensibly the sentiments of good conduct, in the same way as the face and figure insensibly receive the impress of the natural objects in the midst of which a person lives, reflecting their turbulence or their tranquillity.

> "Beauty, born of murmuring sound,
> Shall pass into her face."

No truer description of education has been given than that of Plato, who represents it as a process by which, through familiarity with beautiful sights and models of conduct, the soul is moulded into their likeness, until, when it reaches the age of reason, it takes possession of them as an intelligible body of truth, sees the meaning of them, and is able to think, and produce, and act from them, of its own initiative.

What applies to the education of the young applies, with the necessary modifications, to the self-education of the mature. In general, education is thus the contrivance whereby the two separate, though not antagonistic, groups of phenomena, which were described in a previous chapter as forming the basis of the true ideas of the individuality and of the law, are reconciled one with another, and combined into one harmonious whole. Education mediates between the individual and the law, in such manner that

the law or comprehensive order lives in persons, not as constraint, but as nature, and that he only possesses a true individuality who has his impulses moulded into conformity with the law, and obeys it in loyalty, and not in unwilling subjection.

26. Education in man is thus something different from the change of ideal: it qualifies for acting a given ideal; it is distinct from the introduction of a new. The education of the young corresponds to the training by which the swallow accustoms its offspring to the use of their wings, or the cat instructs its kitten to mouse. That of the adult in man or the animals is nothing but the gradual learning at the hands of experience of what his powers are. Education is therefore different from that struggle or extermination by which a species comes to exist. For education is the evolving or the drawing out of an ideal which is already present: to be educated, a person must have set foot already on the right path. But the change of ideals which makes morality grow means the conquest of a new ideal over an old, the extrusion of an old plan of life to make room for a new, and with it the fresh delimitation of good from evil. It is like discovery in science, which alters the proportions of former truth, and different from the simple acquisition, by an ignorant but aspiring mind, of truth which is already the possession of others.

It is only, therefore, in virtue of a certain assumption that moral progress (for we need not here distinguish change from progress) can be described, as it often is, as being in the individual a perpetual self-education, or, in the whole, an education of the human race. The assumption is that the higher ideal already exists in some mind or minds to which other minds are as those of children. In the famous work in which Lessing broached the idea of an education of the human race, he represented mankind as learning their lesson from God. It is no slight praise of that great man that he should have stated his

theory in a form which raises a definite issue: we have here a metaphor which stands or falls along with the assumption on which it depends. Where that assumption is not made, the idea of a perpetual education conceals a certain obscurity of ideas.

27. Nevertheless, though education and progress are to be distinguished, they are intimately bound together, and indeed inseparable. In the first place, education goes hand in hand with punishment; the process by which good impulses are developed, according to the meaning of an ideal, is inseparable, in fact, from the discipline by which evil impulses are eradicated. And this, it will be observed, is not peculiar to the education of children: if the child has to be punished for being naughty, the adult man is exceptional who has not had to acquire his moral improvement at the cost of many transgressions, with reproaches from his returning conscience and condemnation by his fellow-men. In simple verses, familiar to every one, Goethe has described how we purchase with tears the knowledge of our better selves.[1]

But punishment is only the negative aspect of the process by which the teacher retains the taught on his side. The question of corporal punishment, which was once so hotly debated, is a question of what proportion the disciplinary element in its severest form should bear to the more positive force of authority. It is not part of my task to settle this question, even if I had the necessary experience. But it is an indispensable requisite of all useful teaching that the teacher should by force of character maintain some sympathetic hold on the feelings of the taught, whether that force is one of masterfulness or of gentleness. In the moral education of the child, natural affection, as already observed, renders the task less diffi-

[1] "Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass;
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass;
Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte."

cult. But in intellectual education, the mere imparting of knowledge is relatively easy for the skilful teacher who can measure the extent of his pupil's powers. The hardest part of his task is to break through the crust of reserve, and so effect that communion of feeling, and with it of intellect, without which learning is unfruitful for the learner, and teaching ineffectual for the teacher. Of all teachable persons, the most dispiriting is the person of good intellect but cold or ungenial temperament, before whose silence or impassive acceptance the enthusiasm of the teacher is frozen up. While, on the other hand, one of the most attractive (at any rate, among older students) is the person who, by probing all that is taught him, and insisting on the satisfaction of his own difficulties, testifies an interest in his subject, and a respect for his teacher which he is often at no pains openly to express.

28. But, secondly,—to put aside this interconnection of individual education with the process by which the distinction of right and wrong is enforced,—it is in the course of educating the moral nature according to the ideal of right that those other needs make their appearance which demand the change of ideal. If we turn to animals, the training by which the young are made to go in the ways of their parents brings to light the variations which lead to the superseding of the parents' ways. In knowledge, it is by learning the old that at the same time we qualify ourselves for discovering the new. We may go further. Supposing that in morals (or in the animal world) we take only that irregular line of descent which includes the good, and discard the ideals which are exterminated or left behind, then the movement of ideals is continuous with education, and progress may therefore be described as an education of society. It is continuous with education in this sense, that education leads to the discovery of a new ideal, and when that new ideal has won for itself conviction, those who are

persuaded have again a lesson to learn from the discoverers, have to be raised to the level of the new order, as before they were being raised to the level of the old.

Take for clearness the growth of new ideas in politics, where, from the larger scale of things, or from the greater coarseness of the elements, the growth of practical ideas can be seen as under a microscope. Here we can observe how different progress is from education, and how inseparable and continuous they are. In working out a plan of civic life, the leader of a party makes the discovery of a needed reform, which he advocates, banishing in himself his former ideal, while the rest qualify themselves for participation with him by accepting his change. This new ideal is established in the party not by education, but partly by persuasion, partly by the growth of a conviction in his followers' minds. Once this general conviction is effected, the statesman is left to "educate his party" into the full significance of the reform which they have adopted. But his education of them depends on the prior sympathy between him and them, a sympathy which is not the result of education. It is the same with the more strictly social part of conduct, where education and progress join hands just in so far as the reformer or reformers, having once impressed their ideas on the conviction of their fellows, begin from this basis of common aspiration to give each individual member of the new type greater knowledge of its requirements. Education therefore leads to a change of ideal, and this change effected, it operates again upon this new basis. But while upon this hypothesis they are thus continuous, they remain distinct processes. The belief that all life is merely an education depends upon this continuity, while it overlooks the essential difference of the two factors involved.

CHAPTER IV.

MORAL PROGRESS.

I.—The Development of the Moral Ideal.

1. (*a.*) *General Process.*—We have seen how the distinction of good and bad arises within a society from the victory of one variety over the rest: we can now revert to the problem of the development of morality, and trace the further operation of the struggle of ideals in its parallelism with the conflict of natural species. Let us first state the phenomena which constitute the data for the problem to be solved in morality. They correspond to those which constitute the problem of species. In the organic world we have extant together a large number of species—beginning with very lowly organisms and ending with man—which exhibit very different stages of development. Some of them are more closely connected with one another and form genera. The problem for the naturalist is to account for the origin of this diversity of species, using not only all the facts of the present day, but the records of past animal life which are left behind in the strata. In morality we have in like manner various co-existing societies with various ideals of conduct or institutions of life, constituting so many specific types of social life. Some of these are grouped together by strong resemblances, like the codes of the Christian communities of Europe, or, again, those of primitive barbarous tribes. These societies stand upon different stages of development, the affinities of the lower with the higher being traceable not only in the survival of archaic insti-

tutions, but in the history of the progress of the more developed. History is the palæontology of moral ideals, preserving for us the institutions which have become obsolete. In two respects we are thus better provided for a study of the growth of morality, and the law which regulates that growth, than of the growth of species: first, because of the abundance of our recorded material; and second, because the change from one state of development to another is, in many instances, so patent a fact. It was indeed the discovery of development in human ideas and institutions which taught us to look for a connection of natural species with one another by lines of descent from common ancestors.

2. According to the Darwinian theory of development, the interval between a new species and its parent is bridged over by a series of variations which have successively accumulated qualities suitable for survival. In tracing the change of the moral standard from one well-marked form to another, we have shown in like manner how a slight change in the ideal produces fresh modifications, until the moral institutions come to wear a different aspect from that which they previously wore. The new species thus represents the result of a long-continued process of the same kind as that which produced the insensible modification of the original ideal.

A great revolution in conduct arises therefore from the gradual and continuous onward movement of sentiment which eludes definite expression in creeds. It has been silently prepared, and the interval which separates it from the ideal which immediately precedes it is indefinitely small: but just this slight addition, by completing the work, creates an order of action which appears to those who have been unconsciously helping it on in the light of a revelation or a cataclysm. As it is the last grain of sand which makes the heap, so the vivifying and prophetic power of the great reformer or the great artist or the great discoverer accomplishes the work which

men separated from him by only a slight interval could not themselves finish. It has become almost a tiresome truism to say that there were reformers before the Reformation. Many brave men must have lived before we could have a hero. Hence the immense importance of tracing the antecedents of great changes, and at the same time its danger. It exhibits the continuous movement of mind from small beginnings—a fact far more wonderful than a sudden convulsion would be. It is misapplied if it diminishes the significance of the great men who, however the cause be described, call it inspiration, or call it merely the lucky chance of being born a few years later than their predecessors, have put the finishing stroke to the work. Great men no more suffer for their dependence on others than a doctrine has the less claim to be true if it has often been stated before. On the contrary, great men possess their prophetic quality because they have drunk at the same spring as the general mind, but drunk more deeply and without stirring the impurities.

3. A successful variation of the standard is thus a new standard in the making. Its growth depends on the growth of new ideals within the old society. How these variations are caused is as difficult to understand in man as in the lower animals. But it is needful to record a protest against the assumption that because a moral variation, like an animal variation, is with propriety described as accidental or fortuitous, it is therefore a matter of chance in the depreciatory sense that it might have been otherwise, or that there is no reason for its existence. Every stage in the process is determined by causes which would be discovered were they not so difficult to find. The germination of the idea of independent judgment which found expression in Luther has well-ascertained antecedents: if we knew more we might discover why it came to exist in the mind of Luther rather than another. What, in fact, do we

mean by saying that a variation is accidental? We are simply putting ourselves into the position occupied by a person before the event. That a die when thrown should show five is the result of definite causes: it is accidental only before it was thrown, because six different throws were possible, and each, so far as we know, was as likely as the other. Chance is therefore not antagonistic to causation, but is correlative to our ignorance of causation.

4. It is not difficult to lay down certain general propositions about the causes of variations. Largely, no doubt, they are due to the contact of different minds, with their various ideals of conduct, just as truth emerges from conflict of spoken or written thoughts with one another. On a great scale this phenomenon appears in the growth of new civilisations from the intermixture of peoples by conquest, both conqueror and conquered contributing to a new type of institutions. Witness, for instance, the growth of feudalism from the intercrossing of Teutonic and Roman ideas, or of Christianity from the shock of Semitic religious ideas against the cosmopolitanism of the Roman Empire. As from the marriage of individuals new variations are produced, so minds fertilise each other to produce new ideas.

In different societies, also, the rate of variability is very different, and upon this seems to depend the distinction of mobile from stagnant societies. Amongst the animals it is the larger genera which tend to the greater variability. To the largeness of an animal group corresponds not so much the greatness of the society, as the complexity and variety of the interests included under the ideal of the age; for the moral ideal is not merely the common quality of individual ideals, but is organised out of them. Greater variability in moral ideals is therefore a product of the number or extent of a society and its differentiation; but the second is the more important, because numbers are only valuable in so far as they offer more chances for the existence of differences. Hence while the

nation is more progressive than the city-state, or a large manufactory than a small concern, on the other hand the vast but homogeneous societies of the East are less progressive than the smaller but more complex societies of the West. Contrast the history of Sparta with its small numbers and its uniformity with the highly varied and progressive life of Athens: the development of commerce and manufactures, with the more monotonous occupation of agriculture: the country with cities and their quick practical and intellectual life—we shall find that the rate of progress depends mainly on complexity of interests. In order to strike out new experiments in living, there must be in the first place a diffusion of the ideal over a large number of persons, and more important still, there must be variety of capacities and functions in the life of the society. Accordingly where freer scope is left to individual inclinations or aptitudes, there the friction of mind against mind is more intense. New ideas are generated in the more vivid consciousness of the people, and life becomes more inventive.

Moreover, in the history of the same people, variations are more rapid in certain periods than in others. When some new and great idea is fermenting in the minds of men, the time is crowded with interesting and salient events. Such periods offer another illustration of how the life of a nation repeats on a large scale the experiences of an individual man. As the time spent in an agreeable and diversified employment seems to be gone in a moment, while in retrospect it appears an age: so while each actor in these progressive periods of a nation's history feels the longest life too short to accomplish the ideas of which the time is full; to the historian, looking back over the past, the nation seems to have effected in a few years a work which, measured by other ages, might have employed the slow labour of a century.

5. (*b.*) *Generic Ideals.*—The development of a new

moral ideal from an old means, as we have seen, the expulsion by one variety of others and of the parent ideal. But the latter may produce not one new ideal, but several. Of the different varieties that arise several may maintain themselves against the species with which they have to contend. We shall thus have a number of ideals existing side by side, all modifications of one original stock: they will be related to each other, but will owe their resemblance not to any historical continuity between themselves, but to descent from a common origin, just as the present ape and man are not connected by linear descent, but by their origin from a common ancestor. The original species may disappear in the process, but the different resulting species will now belong to one common genus.

Thus, for example, all the European nations except Turkey have a common Christian civilisation, but within this circle of ideas their institutions differ extremely. The different sets of institutions are derived species from the common moral ideal established among them, which was differentiated into discrepant varieties on account of the character of the nations amongst whom it took root. Each nation has gone its own way. Each has established its own distinction of right and wrong by a struggle between itself and surrounding varieties. But the different ideals have not interfered with each other; and, like animal species, they have maintained themselves within the range of conditions which they were called upon to meet.

We may see this process by which a great species breaks up into a number of others, which are then generically connected, repeated on a small scale in the different codes of observance which arise within a single small society, and are veritable species of that social ideal. There are, for instance, the codes of honour which separate aristocrats from plebeians, and generally classes from one another. While still remaining within the society, and

recognising certain duties towards all the members of the society, the classes insist on certain exclusive laws which are confined to themselves. A gentleman will fight with another gentleman, but not with a man of low birth. The distinction of classes has always led to specifications of the whole ideal of society which are valid within a more limited range.

6. We can thus account for the co-existence of many species of the same genus, and at the same time for their wide divergence. Ideals once formed may cease to advance *pari passu* with their cognate species, though they maintain themselves under their own conditions. Out of one genus five different species may go on developing rapidly, discovering new modes of life, while the sixth will remain practically unchanged, because its changes are inappreciable. It will last down to the time of the more highly developed ideals, so that at one time the highest and the lowest moralities may co-exist. The history of the higher will show traces of its having passed through stages akin to the lower ideals. Thus there is no doubt that the inhabitants of England passed through a stage not the same as what we now find amongst savage tribes, but akin to it, as being derived from a common ideal. But the savage ideals have lasted on till our own day, and exist as independent moral ideals, while if we find amongst ourselves persons possessing the sentiments of savages, we should condemn them as bad. Starting as the generic type of several species, the original ideal has been extinguished in one part of the earth by the growth of new ideals, while in another part it continues with but slight change, until perhaps, in the end, it comes into conflict with the more civilised societies.

The same reasoning accounts for the extreme *divergence* of ideals. Different varieties of one species develope along their own lines, and as they recede from their common origin their differences become accentuated more

and more. Scholars tell us how an original manuscript is changed in transcribing, and the copies are again altered in copying, until at last the extant manuscripts differ extremely both from one another and their archetype. In like manner by the accumulation of small differences along their own lines the different varieties of a moral species come to exhibit well marked differences, which are only explained when we trace them up to their common origin. But this tendency to divergence, as will be explained later, is always being corrected by the diffusion of ideas.

7. Starting, then, from a simple ideal, the struggle of ideals leads to the development of many new ideals which rank together and coexist with lower ideals akin to stages through which the former have historically passed. It is most important to observe that every ideal is a social ideal, applying to every member of the society, and consequently when new species are generated from it they retain the kind of sociality from which they derive. Thus, for instance, the various Hellenic states which developed out of the original Hellenic stock took very different forms, as Athenian, Spartan, Corinthian, and the like. But they share in the generic character. The original ideal consisted of certain observances in which all Greeks shared as such. Hence when this ideal was modified into the Athenian ideal, the old observances were not retained as valid only for Athenians, but as between all Greeks alike, no matter though they did not share in the special Athenian laws. One part of their morality is therefore that of Greeks as Greeks, not that of Athenians as simply Athenians. The same is true of Christianity. When the Christian ideal conquered the western world, starting from an obscure corner of the Roman Empire, and displacing all other social ideals, it subdivided into many species, but the duties of man to man which it taught are retained in all the minor ideals of Christian states, who owe certain parts of their

conduct not merely to Englishmen or Frenchmen, but to all mankind. When America separated from England, though it severed political ties, it retained that portion of the European code which was independent of political conditions, and did not cease to owe certain duties to mankind because it broke off from its parent society.

Hence, generally, whenever we can place a moral ideal under a generic type, then if the latter implies inclusion under it of all persons of a particular character, each species of the genus, though it may embrace only a few members of the whole, contains certain precepts which include under themselves all the members of the genus, no matter how diverse in their other institutions.

8. In applying this statement we must proceed with care. We must not include under the generic type mere similarity of customs or institutions, when those institutions concern only the members of the species, and have no reference to others. Thus, for instance, the generic type of European nations consists of Christian morality, and certain duties in respect of knowledge and art, and certain others to be mentioned later. But there is a similarity between English and German and French customs, for example, which has grown up because of the similar circumstances in which people of the same stock have been placed—similar industrial organisation, similar means of conveyance, and so forth. Duties in respect of these, let us say, in England concern an Englishman only as an Englishman, not as a man: they are specifically English, not generically European, for they do not enter into the consciousness of a European as such. The law-abiding Englishman and the law-abiding Frenchman alike have their chimneys swept, but this duty they owe to their own country, not to all mankind.

We have also to remember that the kind of sociality involved in the generic type is very different in different times. This meets a difficulty which might be offered to our statement from savage customs. Savages have more or

less identity of customs, and doubtless are sprung from a common primitive type which spread over the earth, just as similarity in the forms of life in widely distant parts of the earth implies descent from the members of a common stock which migrated from place to place, and produced descendants under similar conditions.[1] These similar ideals have a generic identity: yet if the genus is always a social ideal it might be expected that the various tribes would recognise certain duties as between one another, which they would have retained from their earlier condition. This is, however, not the case. But in reality such morality as the primitive man possessed would be of a very low order: it would not be like that of the Greek who recognised some claim in a Greek as such, or like that of the Christian who recognises a claim in a man as such. Primitive societies, in fact, have scarcely any social cohesion: they are more like low organisms which may reproduce themselves by fission, or homogeneous colonies of animals, such as sponges. A primitive society might send off branches without the latter retaining any duties to the former. The only community recognised may be that of those who live together, and it would not therefore apply to a colony in respect of the home stock. There is an actual identity between the Zulu and the Algonquin, but the consciousness of that identity does not enter into the ideal of either. The generic type being limited to the simple community of persons who live together, it is only this ideal which is transmitted to the subordinate species.

9. (*c.*) *Similarity of Ideals.*—Similarity of ideals of conduct is thus due to two different causes, either to parallelism of growth or to the actual extension of one social ideal over a larger group of men. Both cases have their analogies in the organic world. A species having

[1] *Origin of Species*, c. xi., pp. 297 ff. (6th ed.), 'On the forms of life changing almost simultaneously throughout the world.'

diffused itself over a wide area goes through the same changes in different parts, so that the fossils in the strata in widely distant regions exhibit the same succession of forms. On the other hand, a species comes to prevail and to overrun the earth by an actual struggle with other species, in the course of which the latter become extinct. The struggle for survival is not only between many varieties of a species, but between these and other species as well. In like manner, while the distinction of good and evil represents within a society the struggle of varieties of ideals existent in the minds of individual members, the social ideal itself spreads and includes other societies within its range. I will indicate the differences which arise in both cases from the fact that we are dealing with minds which act upon ideas, and not with lower organisms, and I will take the second case first of the actual inclusion of new societies within one ideal, and return afterwards to the case where identity is produced by parallelism of growth.

10. With the animals struggle means extirpation of the weaker; with man it means conquest not merely in the sense of victory, but in the sense of absorption of the conquered into the society of the conquerors. There are indeed few victories which are satisfied without actual appropriation of part of the conquered people. Now wherever conquest in this special sense takes place, we have the extension of the victorious ideal over the conquered people. Even where the victorious society does not appropriate part of the conquered territory, it compels its enemies to adapt their institutions so as to live peaceably. But this supplanting of their former ideal does not demand their actual extinction, though it is often not accomplished without previous loss of life. Thus when a people like the Romans spread their empire over a whole world, they did so not by extinction of former species, but by imposing a new mode of life upon them. The conquests of Alexander imported fresh ideals of

civilisation into the East. It is former ideals of life which are extirpated, and not, except in some cases, former individuals. A people like the ancient Persians might destroy their enemies root and branch: but they had little or no sense of the value of human life. In the vast empires of the East the individual life was lost in the perspective. But just as a cruel man likes to see his victim writhe, so a good man wishes not to destroy his opponent, but to see him stamped with the mark he has himself set on him. A devastating victory which exterminates an enemy beyond the point when he has yielded is a sign of a savage society, where the idea of a man goes hardly beyond the idea of his physical life.

Nor is it even necessary that the conquest should be accomplished by the shedding of blood. The Mussulman religion spread by the aid of the sword, but Christianity, though its diffusion was attended by blood, spreading first within the Roman Empire, then gradually brought all the nations of Europe within its sway by persuasion or conversion, dispossessing the moral species which it found. Just as you must sometimes, it is thought, hang a man to make him and society better, but you trust most to the force of education, so the diffusion of an ideal over a larger society depends partly upon actual violence, but mostly on the capacity of the conquered to escape destruction by embracing the institutions of their conquerors. As morality becomes more refined there enters into the moral ideal itself a sentiment of aversion from extending higher institutions by the destruction of lower races. In our dealings with savage tribes we are beginning to feel that we may not lawfully compass their destruction, but must either leave them unmolested, or train them till they are fit for higher conditions.

11. In speaking of the imposition of a new ideal on a conquered people, it must be remembered that the result is a product of the two civilisations, not the mere extru-

sion of one by the other. The vanquished teach their victors: the Greek civilisation in the expiry of its political freedom bequeathed its culture to its conquerors; they in their turn having been conquered by the barbarians, bound them in the chains of Roman manners. Hence the paradox that institutions do not always appear to follow the flag.[1] But this is in truth only an appearance: though the Roman influence may seem preponderant in the joint result, it was the new element which supplied the invigorating spirit, and this spirit made the institutions different. The Romans were strong enough to join together many peoples into one empire: but for the work of creating the modern nations another temper was required. It is true that in course of time the conquered population may, by intermarriage with their conquerors, or by more rapid multiplication, again supply the preponderating influence in the whole; as it is sometimes asserted that the pre-Aryan peoples are now dominating their Aryan conquerors. But this in its turn is a new revolution.

12. Turning now to the phenomena of parallel development, it is the possibility of teaching men which in like manner makes so striking a difference between these phenomena amongst the descendants of one moral species, and the corresponding phenomena in lower organisms. In both cases the similarity of development, as, *e.g.*, in the different European nations, follows from the similarity of conditions under which the species grow. But whereas similar animals living in different parts of the world do not affect each other's growth, societies may interchange their ideas of conduct and of institutions. The ideal of democracy was learnt by France from America, in whose revolution the French recognised that which should complete the aspirations they had themselves been nursing so long. From France the revolution spread

[1] Mr. D. G. Ritchie has brought out this point in his *Darwinism and Politics*, p. 20.

like a spark in a train of gunpowder over the minds of all Europe. At the present day nothing that happens in one nation in the growth of its institutions fails to affect the others, at least those which stand on the same level of culture. But this diffusion of ideas must not be understood as accounting for the origin of similar ideas, but only regarded as a modifying incident. Nothing can be more opposed to the other facts of development than to suppose similarity of habits is due to borrowing.[1] Amongst primitive tribes we find similarity of customs and ideas where borrowing is out of the question. The real cause is, as stated above, the natural growth under similar conditions. When borrowing takes place it only puts the finishing touch to a change which has been silently prepared beforehand. Often we cannot trace any definite borrowing, but new ideas seem to spring up in all quarters producing similar results, which we attribute, therefore, to the spirit of the times, the *Zeitgeist*. But the printing-press and the newspaper ensure the diffusion through all the nations of each new experiment in amelioration.

13. How far the communication of moral ideals, which in this way either extends a comprehensive ideal over many societies, or produces similarity in various related societies, depends upon conditions of race, it is not easy to say. There seems certainly to be an identity of qualities in certain peoples which connects them one with the other, and has led to the notion that morality represents the properties of what is called, by a metaphor derived from physiology, social tissue. The basis of this conception[2] appears to me to be this power of communicating ideals from one society to another. But though some races

[1] Mr. Andrew Lang has insisted on this point. Cp. *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, and *Culture and Myth, passim*.

[2] Which is used by Mr. Leslie Stephen. See *Science of Ethics*, ch. iii. section iv., especially p. 130: "We might perhaps accept as a sufficient criterion (*i.e.*, of identity of social tissue) the capacity of different races to blend with each other."

seem unable to bear the strain of higher civilisations, we cannot limit this communicability simply by race. When the Hindoos learn the language and adopt some of the practices of the English, and when a people like the Japanese surprise us by adopting Western institutions, they show how impossible it is to draw rigid lines at which the communicability of moral ideals must be supposed to end.

14. Both these influences—the diffusion of manners and customs by borrowing or by actual conquest—operate to modify the process by which the divergence of ideals has been produced. That process has been already described in general terms, but we have to notice a further feature. In man, as in the animal world, the main line of advance is not a single and continuous line, but a very broken and irregular one. The civilisations which have left the greatest mark upon the world have not been produced by a single body of men: the duty of bearing the torch has been delegated to different peoples. If we possessed sufficient knowledge and patience we might trace how the civilisation of Western Europe is connected through common ancestors with the highly dissimilar forms which are extant at the present day or are recorded in history. But just as a discoverer may stop at his discovery, while his pupil who could not himself have made it may advance it and even eclipse the fame of his teacher, so the burden of progress has shifted to different shoulders. A picture of the vitalising ideas of history might show (like Hegel's sketch) how Oriental ideas like those of India are succeeded by the more concrete civilisation of Greece, this by the colder but more comprehensive institutions of Rome, and this by the ideals of Western Europe, with which we are too intimately connected to judge without bias who are the pioneers. But the Greeks themselves were not Orientals, nor the Romans Greeks: nor are Englishmen, though their lives are full, in their political and civil and social institutions,

in their art and science and philosophy, and in their religion, of Rome and Greece and the East, descendants of Greeks or Romans or Orientals. A people remains apparently quiescent, dull, and passive for centuries, and then suddenly flashes out into brilliance and becomes the guide of advance. Conversely, having once led progress it need not always be in the van. Because England has been the acknowledged leader of parliamentary institutions in the past, we cannot conclude (however much we may try to make it so) that the pattern of political life in the future may not be some other people which has hitherto seemed to lag behind.

15. These are facts which have their explanation in the process by which institutions are generated. But the separate peoples have not pursued their own lines unaffected by other ideals. Partly they have done this, and hence wherever they have come under the sway of other ideals they have given them a peculiar colouring. But partly they have borrowed from others, and partly they have become included in a more comprehensive civilisation. Thus, to keep to our examples, Roman institutions have been imposed on the law and the politics of the greater part of Europe: Greek philosophy spread from Greece to Rome: and later, when the Turks destroyed the Greek dynasty at Constantinople, they drove Greek ideas over the Adriatic to refresh the West once more, and—continuing directly the work which had been begun indirectly and in certain departments by the Arabs—to vivify its science, its literature and art, and its politics as well, with the rationality of the ancient ideals. If we go further back, it is well known how great was the original debt of Greece to Phœnician civilisation, and how, later, Oriental influences acted upon it at every step and turn. The conquests of Alexander in the far East must have created a certain transfusion of Indian ideas into Greek. Later still, Persian and Egyptian religion

became definitely distinguishable elements in Rome and Greece, until at last Christianity submerged the ancient creeds.

II.—Progress and Goodness.

16. (*a.*) *Criterion of Progress.*—If there is any law which runs through the course of moral development, it can only be discovered by inquiring what the actual history of morality has been. But there is one question which we must answer before attempting this task. In common language we identify development and progress more or less exactly. Is this identification justifiable? Can we say that the development of morality is also a progress? Or is there some further test by which certain developments may be considered progressive, but others must be pronounced retrogressive.

The question arises thus. All morality, we find, is in a process of change, in the course of which societies pass from lower or less perfect to higher or more perfect forms, leaving behind them stages of morality on very various levels. Hence the absurdity of judging a past society by the standard of the present day. Every moral ideal is a species which is perfect after its own kind, and proves its right to existence by that victory over opposing ideals embodied in the distinction of right and wrong. The moral ideals develope in various lines. But in thus changing from one form to another, does morality progress, and not merely change? Can we consider goodness to be always progressive, while badness is retrogressive?

To this question the answer must, I believe, be given in the affirmative. Goodness means progress: wickedness means retrogression, or else it means stagnation, which compared with advance is retrogression. In changing from one form to another morality changes from what is right under one set of conditions to what is right under another set, and such change from good to

good is what we mean by becoming better. To deny this is to find some other standard of advance than in the actual movement which has taken place, to put an *à priori* conception of development in the place of the facts. *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.* History is itself the bar at which institutions are to be judged.

17. It may be asserted at the outset that every society works out its own destiny, and that the actual course of history is determined by certain laws. Every society does all that it can with all the forces at its disposal under its circumstances, and is ever bringing out more and more what is its real character. Societies fall under the same rule as all other things, that they endeavour, in the language of Spinoza, *in suo esse perseverare*, to persist in their being. Everything in the world is in this sense perfect, but not everything is good. Goodness and badness form a distinction within society itself.

Now, that goodness makes progress would be perceived immediately if it were not that societies do not always remain distinct, but interfere, so that one society comprehends another. If there were only one society, whatever forward movement it made must be considered progress, for there would be no other standard of judgment. A few individuals might dislike the change, but they must either find their account with it or accept condemnation. You cannot bring an indictment against a whole moral revolution. Goodness represents the solution of all the conflicting elements in the problem of social life, and hence whatever change the standard underwent would be considered as a change for the better. Suppose a society composed of a few learned persons, with their own families and those of their domestics, and that in course of time the children of the savants acquired a taste for luxurious living and a distaste for learning. The cooks have multiplied faster than the savants, or their children have become predominant by greater force of character. The ideal of the society would come to be set by the

cooks instead of by the philosophers, but within that society itself this ideal would be esteemed higher than that which it displaced. It would be absurd to reply that the whole society had become degraded or had abused its trust, as we should certainly say of such a body of persons in our own larger society. For I am supposing that this is the only existent society, and the law under which the society lives is itself that which marks off good from bad.

18. No development, then, of a society considered by itself can be considered as anything but a progress. It is only the individuals in it who do or do not progress according as they do or do not act in harmony with the accepted ideal. Societies, however, do not stand alone, but sometimes form elements of a larger society. Whenever this is so, a society may remain good according to its own lights, but fail to help progress; but the reason is, that judged by the standard of the whole society its ideal is a bad one, and the society is really bad or retrogressive.

To illustrate the way in which societies are judged by contact with wider societies, let us take the small exclusive codes within a given society, which are, as we have seen, species of the generic ideal. As time goes on they become worn out, and the practice of them is discredited and condemned. If we consider the aristocratic class in different European states we should find different results. In our own country its exclusive code of honour has generally yielded to the growth of the more general sentiment, and the aristocracy has maintained its pre-eminence by participation in national movements—a result due, no doubt, to the fortunate circumstance that our divisions have been not horizontal between class and class, but vertical, dividing all classes. On the other hand, a nobility, like the French noblesse at the time of the Revolution, may, following its old usages, become really corrupt and degraded in the eyes of a new national move-

ment. Its standard of conduct is therefore retrogressive, because it fails to rise to the claims made upon it by the new conditions arising amongst the whole people. There have been bodies of men whose fall we may deplore, though we see it to have been inevitable and salutary. But perhaps it is not worth while to waste regrets over the men who refused to help Turgot in his measures for the relief of his province, and finally intrigued against him till they drove him from power. Levity and heedlessness do not excuse. The history of morality is not concerned to stop and draw subtle distinctions between deliberate criminality and judicial blindness.

What we have here in small in a given society is repeated on the large scale in the greater societies which include whole peoples, as in some respects all European nations are included for certain duties within one Christian society of man, or, at any rate, of Christendom. Each society follows its own bent, and does right in its own eyes, when it thinks of itself alone. But if its ideal really degrades, that is because the ideal is inadequate to the higher ideal of the society of which it forms part. It is this latter which represents the line of progress, and the former therefore is bad. Thus a nation may commit crimes, which its own public sentiment does not condemn, like those which Napoleon committed with the implied assent of his subjects. Its morality may seem therefore to be on the side of regress, but the higher morality from which it receives condemnation is the real morality, and this it has outraged, as a criminal breaks the laws of his own country.

The moral ideal is always therefore a progress, for either the society is single, and goodness represents the law of its advance, or if the society is part of a larger one, its ideal can be retrogressive only because the society is so far bad.

19. (*b.*) *Degeneration.*—Since goodness and badness

exhaust the field of moral possibilities, if the propositions that goodness means progress, and badness regress, are both true, we must be able to convert them, and maintain that all progress is due to goodness, and all regress to badness. But to be able to do so we must endeavour to meet two great objections which may be urged against the truth of these statements. There is, in the first place, the degeneration of moral institutions, which seems to follow in the natural course of things, and not to be due to any wickedness on the part of the persons concerned. Of such degeneration there seem to be undoubted instances, as in the case of the Bushmen in Africa, or the Patagonians. Here there is regress without badness. Now we must distinguish between two kinds of degeneracy—the one which may be called degradation, which is due to badness, the other which consists only in reversion to a simpler form of life, and is thus apparently retrogressive. Whatever the causes in the past may have been, degeneration seems at present mainly due to a change of conditions, and is comparable to the change by which animals living in the dark, like those of the Kentucky caves, gradually become blind. Many people may thus degenerate naturally by adaptation to new circumstances. They would be varieties which have taken a peculiar direction, and are termed degenerate because their ancestors (like those of the tapeworm) had once a more complex organisation. Their development has, however, been towards greater suitability to their surroundings, and is different altogether from that unsuitability to their conditions which means extinction in the animal world and condemnation in morality. So far then is this degeneration from being a regress, that it is in reality, under the circumstances, a progress. A nation in time of war has often simpler and less highly refined customs than in peace: its institutions are degenerate compared with the institutions of peace. But it is those who obey the changed customs who are on the side

of progress. A man who persisted in the ancient practices would be useless and reprehensible: it is he and not his fellow-countrymen who would be morally degenerate or degraded. A person who has to go a long journey on foot wears less elaborate clothing than one who stays at home; but supposing the journey has to be made, it is the simpler and degenerate dress which helps to make the journey more bearable. In like manner, when a young man of good position, finding no proper sphere for his capacities in Europe, settles on a cattle ranch in the west of America, he drops the more cultivated life to which he has been accustomed for one of greater simplicity. But supposing his original act in leaving to have been justified,—that the life he chose was more likely to be suitable to his powers than any he could live in his own country,—his degeneration of manners is not regress, but helps on the work of the world, and makes him a more efficient person than he would otherwise have been.

20. Ordinary language confuses between these two ideas of simple degeneracy and actual degradation, just as in dealing with their opposites it confuses between perfection of gifts and goodness. Degeneracy is not retrogressive any more than perfection is necessarily progressive. All depends on the use to which they are put. As the highly gifted man may throw a society into a chaos, so mere simplification of life may be really on the side of advance. Degeneracy appears retrogressive because it is local and out of the main line of development, but within this local area, and therefore as an element in the whole, it is progress. The confusion is all the easier to make because in many cases a change of conditions carries with it moral degradation as well, as when savage tribes are displaced by more highly civilised, and fall victims to the temptations offered by the latter. Here is wickedness on both sides, joined with a change of climate and habitat and mode of life.

21. The difference of degradation from ordinary de-

generation may be further illustrated from the members of any one society. A certain amount of vital energy is lost by every one as he grows older, and less is expected of him. He can do less, but he need not degrade. One who has worked hard for many years and has become rich may claim repose in which his former active energies become dormant. But this is different from moral decline, which means badness: as if a man having become rich should grow simply idle and do work of no kind at all, becoming degraded because he makes no good use of his powers. Take again the degradation sometimes produced by unequal and unworthy marriages. Where the original act is regarded as justifiable, the results will probably not be regarded as anything more than a natural change of circumstances. Measured by such a standard, a legitimate act has ended in mere degeneration, but not badness. On the other hand, when the persons are condemned, it will be partly on account of the wrong committed at first, and then for the moral weakness which could not rise superior to the difficulties of an unhappy situation. We shall then have not simple degeneration, but degradation.

22. The normal decay of powers, ending with death, is the strongest obstacle to the belief that degeneration in the individual is compatible with progress. Yet rightly interpreted it is the strongest confirmation of that belief. Granted, it will be said, that a man may go on being good to the end of his life, how can this journey towards extinction be an advantage to him? Most persons will indeed be ready to admit that the normal death of individuals is an advantage to the race by bringing up a reserve of fresh energy, and so keeping the tide at the full. An eminent biologist, Prof. August Weissmann,[1] has shown strong reasons for believing that death came into the world by the ordinary law of selection, according

[1] In a paper on the 'Duration of Life.' The translation of this paper, which I have been permitted to see in proof, will be found in the forthcoming translation of Prof. Weissmann's *Papers on Heredity* (Clarendon Press).

to which those phenomena are preserved which tend to efficient existence. The lowest animals never die normally, but reproduce themselves by fission: the child is half its parent. Death intervenes with the complexity of the organism—a complexity which, according to Prof. Weissmann's belief, would expose a highly prolonged life to accident and consequent inefficiency. But this does not directly concern us. Even supposing death a benefit to the species, how can this reconcile us to the individual loss? And it is because we ourselves never enjoy the fruits of our labour that death is regarded as merely a temporary interruption to a life which is to be continued hereafter.

But if death promotes the efficiency or the advantage of the type, then since each individual is built upon the law of the species his individual advantage is the same as that of the type. Just as every act of self-sacrifice means a real loss, but is to the good man's permanent happiness, so decay and death are a real loss, but they are incidents in the attainment of a total advantage. Hence two facts which seem contradictory. On the one hand, outside the hopes which are suggested by religion there is no consolation for death, except so far as the individual himself or his family and friends can derive consolation from the knowledge that his life has been one of good service. On the other hand, the sober judgment of mankind accepts death as something preferable to the miseries of protracted life, and finds a real truth in the revolting picture which Swift draws of the Struldbrugs, or in the melancholy one which was painted by the fancy of the Greek of Tithonus praying to be released from the gift of immortality. The difficulty of recognising this arises from two sources. Partly it arises because the question is put to persons whose anguish or whose fears render reflection impossible, and vitiate the experiment. Partly it arises from our drawing an imaginary picture of what might have been if no such decay of powers and subsequent

death had existed at all. We set up a standard of advantage according to our wishes, and not according to the facts, and we do not reflect that it is seemingly only on certain terms of compensatory loss that we can retain our higher nature.

What applies to degeneration of the individual, as judged by any one standard, applies with proper modification to the course of morality as a whole. As the life which is well lived up to death is on the side of right, though it may in the end only slightly help on the work of society, so a good society under simpler conditions of existence is always on the side of progress, though it may lie outside the main current of advance.

23. (*c.*) *Non-moral Conditions of Progress.*—The proposition here maintained that morality means progress, and badness regress, will meet with the constant objection that progress depends on non-moral qualities, which may be in possession of the bad and not of the good. Bad men are often as wise as good men are foolish, and while the latter in their weakness have produced many disasters, much of progress is due to great men who are bad. This second proposition is often absurdly exaggerated. Alexander and Cæsar, to whom Greece and Rome owes the gratitude due to benefactors, are held up as monsters of crime for shedding the blood of innocent peoples. A judgment of this kind, which is by no means confined to the survey of ancient times, is but reading a present ideal into a past time, and is an outrage upon the spirit of history. Judged by the standard of their own times both men were not simply great, but performed the duty of their positions. How far either was actuated by merely personal aims is a matter difficult to determine here as elsewhere where ambition to do good deeds and serve the state may be inextricably involved with selfish interests and the mere desire for power.

Apart, however, from such exaggerations, bad men have

undoubtedly been at times the source of progress. Instances occur both from the dealings of societies with one another and within a given society. And they are of two kinds. The bad man may either join or even lead a movement productive of good, or joining a bad movement, he may yet stimulate the energies of the good. Like Napoleon, he may, with ends of his own to serve, lead a whole people to assert a new and vital principle among the nations. On the other hand, some of the later Napoleonic wars were probably unjustifiable, which yet had the effect of arousing the Germans to begin the splendid work of German unity by the War of Liberation. Confining ourselves to a single society, we have beneficent political movements led by men ambitious simply of personal gain: or, on the other hand, we may have a wrong, like illegal taxation, inducing individuals to rise and lead a people in defence of political liberty, as under Charles I.

24. Now in all these cases it may be seen that the rule still holds. Badness, in so far as bad, is against progress: when it conditions progress, this is only in so far as good forces are at work. As to the case of a selfish man who leads a good cause, Green gives, I believe, the right explanation when he points out how "the selfish political leader is himself much more of an instrument than of an originating cause." No man is entirely original in the sense that his actions and his thoughts are not the outcome of countless other influences. In so far as his movement is beneficent, he acts as the medium of those wills which are directed towards the good end. "The more we learn of such a person," says Green, "and of the work which seemed to be his, the more clearly does it appear how what was evil in it arose out of his personal selfishness and that of his contemporaries, while what was good in it was due to higher and purer influences of which he and they were but the medium." [1]

[1] Green's *Prolegomena*, p. 321. Cp. *Lectures on Political Obligation* (Works, vol. ii.), pp. 439-441.

His own act is of a mixed character: without the element of selfish ambition it would have been perfectly good: but in so far as it is contaminated by personal interest it tends against the direction of progress marked out by the forces which supported it.

Once more, when good results from a reaction against wrong, it is by the effort of the good themselves. The liberation of Germany, for instance, was her own moral achievement. Though accelerated by the hard conditions imposed upon the country by Napoleon, the movement for unity was a vital need of the people, and was in fact a part of that general growth of patriotism which went along with the principles of the Revolution. No one, again, could suppose that our Great Rebellion was due so much to the illegality of Charles as to the strength of the sentiment for popular government to which that illegality gave an opportunity of assertion.

Thus where progress seems to result from evil doing, it is in reality caused by the effort after goodness which has either found its spokesman in the bad but gifted man, or has been called forth in others by his conduct. In like manner the foolishness of good men, supposing it to be entirely unavoidable (and only on this condition could we call their actions good), is the natural outcome of the wants of the society, and represents the way in which, under its circumstances, that society has to go. The incapacity which leads unselfish statesmen into mistakes is part of the conditions which make up the life of the society. To go back to the commonplaces of history, if the Athenians could entrust their most important enterprise to Nikias, a man who possessed every virtue, but lacked the gift of political and strategical capacity, the failure of their expedition, and with it the downfall of the state, was only the result of the character which found its ideal in such a man. The virtuous stupidity which can attach to itself the trust of a state is the stupidity against which the gods themselves fight in

vain, because it is written in clear characters on the temperament of a whole people.

25. The truth of this view of the function of non-moral qualities in progress may be best verified if we remember that talented wickedness is not always productive of good, nor virtuous stupidity of evil. On the contrary, the clever bad man is more often a curse than a blessing: and the stupid but duty-loving man is not only not productive of evil, but his blunders may even be of service. It was a complaint of Napoleon's against our soldiers in the Peninsular War that they never knew when they were beaten. But who would not rather be so stupid as not to see that all the laws of war declared him conquered, if his dogged bravery ended by winning him the victory?

Progress, in fact, is the direction in which all the forces acting within and upon a society dispose it to move, so as to maintain its equilibrium. Goodness is the standard which results from the opposition so established against what destroys the equilibrium. Thus progress depends upon certain materials, amongst which are included gifts of intellect, which are non-moral till they are used in action. The good man may have less of them than the bad: but the gifts of all are available for society. But whereas the good are always on the side of progress, the bad man may at once advance it and resist it, the former so far as in virtue of his gifts he falls in with the forward movement of society, the latter so far as the elements of immorality which he imports into his conduct are themselves discarded by the judgment of the society under consideration, whether that society is a small body of men or a company of nations.

26. Hence we arrive at these two results, which do but repeat statements already made. On the one hand, the shape of events and of institutions is determined by all the conditions out of which they arise. But on the other hand, within this history there is a movement forward

distinguishable from the resistance of enemies or the delay of stragglers, and this distinction is enforced by the moral predicates of good and bad. The second proposition supplies the correction to the misapprehensions that may arise from the first. Do you imply, it might be asked, that whatever is is right? The answer is, that if this were so in the strict sense, the distinction of right and wrong would be unmeaning. Those who have held that whatever is is right have meant little more than that everything that happens is intelligible, or is so to a higher power. They have used the word 'right' in the intellectual sense of 'correct,' or 'accountable by reflection.' Such a proposition is at the present time perhaps worth stating, but not worth denying. By a confusion between right as intelligible and right as good, it has been sometimes used to defend any established order. The indignation with which common sense repudiates it implies the detection of this confusion. But what has been asserted here is, not that whatever is is right, but that wherever right is there is progress.

Another possible reproach against the doctrine must be met differently, the reproach of being a doctrine of fatalism. That cry is heard so loudly because the partitions are so thin which divide truth from falsehood. But the belief in fatalism is altogether different from the belief that the movement either of events or institutions is determined by causes. There can be no fatalism in the history of a process where the elements are conscious agents, who, while they act from their characters, are aware of the objects they pursue. Fatalism means that men act at the impulse of some force which they do not understand, and though it dignifies this power by the name of God, the real force to which it surrenders man is the force of circumstances. But the history of mankind is the history of beings who, through their gift of consciousness, subdue circumstances to their own characters.

27. (*d.*) *Misconceptions.*—Progress is therefore not a superior idea by which we can judge the development of moral ideals, so that we should declare a new ideal to be in reality unprogressive. The law of progress is a law of fact, and its contents are the history of morality. I will enforce this proposition by pointing out one or two of the forms of misjudgment of past ages which arise from a preconceived notion of progress. The commonest is perhaps to judge development to be a progress, or the reverse, according as it falls in with our own peculiar likings. This is very often the case with a movement which is taking place in our own time, and affecting ourselves. A few may think it retrogressive, but perhaps it is they who are mistaken, and not the general sentiment which carries the movement on. And judgments of history are subject to the same kind of delusion. Looking back to the free and spontaneous life of the Greek states, with their splendid achievements in civic life and in art and science and philosophy, we may feel that their subjugation under the Roman Empire was a regress, not a progress: the substitution of a dull and uniform monotony of life for independence. Yet we know that the Empire, though it expunged a great deal of what we prize most, was in reality one of the preparations for our modern life, with its Christian ideal of social duties and its system of law. Most of us, if we had the choice, would prefer living in Athens under the rule of Pericles to the life of a Roman provincial under Augustus. Yet if we judged history by our personal leanings, we should be making an entirely capricious standard of progress, which would vary with every age. The affinity of our own century with the features of Greek city-life is a striking and undeniable fact. But men in the eighteenth century, like Gibbon, might be differently inclined. To them it might seem, to quote the well-known words, that "if a man were called upon to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the

human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus." And supposing we had the choice, it would be only in our weaker moments that we should choose to live among a people like the Athenians, who, splendid as were their gifts, were after all but gifted barbarians, rather than to take our share in the dull and monotonous life which ushers in a momentous revolution. Our predilections are at least no test: a succeeding age may again prefer the quiescence of settled government without great or illuminating ideas to the unrest of a time alive with the arts, with speculation, and with political freedom.

28. Another danger is that of imagining retrogression in ages where the more obvious social duties are relaxed in stringency. We have to take the whole of the institutions of an age together, and sometimes we shall find that it is actual progress which, by introducing fresh or modified ideals, may demand some sacrifice on the part of special observances. It would be folly to deny the Renaissance the title of a progressive movement because some of the institutions we regard as most important were treated then with a certain freedom. Partly, of course, our notion of such license may be exaggerated. There may have been a disproportionate amount of wickedness in that age, and because vice is always more striking, and lends itself more easily to rhetorical emphasis than virtue, we may be misled into supposing the standard of the age was much lower than it really was. In the Renaissance or the Elizabethan age, for instance, we cannot suppose that the general standard was that of Benvenuto Cellini or Kit Marlowe. We should have to take into account the doctrine and practice of the Church, and get an idea of how the mass of the people lived, before we could know what the real standard was. But when we have made allowance for exaggeration, we may see that something of common morality had to be lost in the satisfaction of

what was the most urgent need of the time, the assertion of civic, intellectual, and artistic freedom.[1] A new ideal may be incompatible with retaining all the features of the old. The separation of the holy from the secular life undoubtedly involved evils, but these evils may have been the price which the world had to pay for the introduction of a beneficent religion among peoples whose characters were unable to realise its precepts in their simplicity. Just as on occasion a man may have to sacrifice a general duty, like filial affection, when it conflicts with some higher claim, so whole institutions may lose something in the effort to adapt themselves to a new order, while the total result is still not retrogression but progress.

III.—The Law of Progress.

29. (*a.*) *The Law of Differentiation.*—Can the facts of progress be summed up under one comprehensive and single law of progress? Plainly all progress tends to produce a higher organisation, but this answer is a truism until we show in what higher organisation consists. The test which is usually given is that of increasing differentiation of parts with corresponding specialisation of functions. But before such a statement can be accepted we must indicate certain characteristics of human progress which must be borne in mind.

First, the main course of progress is not linear, or in one continuous direction. The comparison of history to a spiral applies to moral ideals as well as it does to all human development. Human history constantly exhibits the spectacle of an apparent reversion to a former type, but the reversion is only apparent. The new type resembles the old, but it stands at a higher level: and it runs its course parallel to the line of development of the former

[1] An illustration due to an essay, 'The Sacrifice,' in Vernon Lee's *Euphorion.*

type, yet always preserving the essential differences. The stream of history, like the St. Gothard tunnel, performs the seemingly impossible feat of not merely remounting to the region whence it began, but to one vertically above. Philosophy in its history offers the readiest illustration of how the development of ideas repeats itself, so that at first sight the mind seems to be re-discovering its old ideas. The rationalistic writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century bear an outward resemblance to the thinkers of the Greek enlightenment, and were succeeded by a movement of construction which insisted on the objective value of reason, much as Socrates and his successors insisted on the universal validity of moral and intellectual principles. The resemblance is only superficial, for these guiding ideas of individualism or absolutism had an entirely different significance in the different ages—a significance which it is the business of the history of philosophy to formulate. Hence thought is always progressing, though a new thinker may seem only to be re-discovering a forgotten principle. In reality, his principle is the result of the development to which the other principle gave rise, and is a new creation. If the current doctrine of evolution should lead to a philosophy resembling the great constructive systems of the first quarter of this century, we shall have not a reversion, but a movement of thought to the next whorl of the spiral. The case is the same with moral institutions. The very emergence of human society from lower forms of life is an illustration; the earliest human societies are mere aggregations, which recall not the highest, but the lowest forms of animals, living in homogeneous colonies. Ages like our Elizabethan age recall in their features "the freshness of the early world." The Roman Empire establishes a great homogeneous order of institutions recalling the earlier empires, from which it differs *toto caelo* in the level of its political ideal. The great revolutionary movement of 1789 of peoples against authority

recalls the earlier struggles against the spiritual supremacy of Rome. In our own days we seem in our conception of the nation to be reverting to the idea of a state such as it is presented to us in small ancient societies. Perhaps the institution of property may revert to a form more primitive still. In all these cases, then, progress does not simply move on one single line, but retraces its own steps, though with wholly different principles. It is in this sense that human history may be said to move in cycles: each cycle not repeating the preceding, but reverting to similar forms in a similar order of succession, while breathing into these forms an entirely new spirit.[1]

30. Secondly, It follows from this that mere differentiation is insufficient to define progress. Along with differentiation goes a process of integration, not simply in the sense of increasing cohesion, or the growth of a principle of order to match the tendency of differences towards chaos, but in the sense that some idea is produced which reconciles distracting interests under some simplifying principle. While the differentiation really advances, yet its significance alters, or, let us say, the relative places of specialisation and of unity alter. Great revolutions simplify. Often a new idea seems to pass over a previous stage of life as with a sponge, and wipes out its characteristic features, introducing uniformity where before was diversity. Not that the results of the past are lost. As the forests of the coal-age are submerged, but are stored up to warm the hearths and colour the fogs of other ages,

[1] Whether there is any such phenomenon of cycles in the organic world I do not know. It certainly seems to exist in the chemical world, and it is described in the so-called Periodic Law, to which a chemical friend has introduced me. This generalisation, which to a layman seems exquisite, may be stated thus. Arrange the elements in a line according to the gradual increase of the atomic weight: then they fall into groups, and the members of these groups go through a cycle of changes in their physical and chemical properties. The cycle is repeated in each group, but the properties become intensified as we pass from the earlier to the later groups. (See a popular account of the law in Wurtz' *Atomic Theory*, Internat. Scient. Series.)

so all the products of human life are preserved. But in the transformation they undergo they may be simplified. Thus when Greek and other civilisations are submerged in that of the Roman Empire, doubtless there is in the latter a higher complexity and differentiation than in a Greek state; but the individual subject of the Empire is far less differentiated than the individual subject of Athens. He occupies a relatively unimportant place. His own personal sphere of freedom is perhaps curtailed, though his value as an individual is higher because he participates in a higher unity. The case is the same with the growth of knowledge. While little departments of knowledge are considered and cultivated for themselves, the diversity of facts and laws is enormous. A great generalisation which combines all these facts under one single statement, while it produces a higher organisation of the facts, will alter the relative independence of each. Christianity itself, to revert to an example so often used, introduces a principle of life simpler than that which recognises duties of Greek to Greek, Roman to Roman, and the like, because it obliterates these national differences. In so far, it decreases diversity, and its principle is one of homogeneity. From another point of view it gives a surer individual status to each man, or the differentiation which its principle permits is of a higher order than that of the Greek or Roman state. In the same way the social and political movements of this century, which have thrown the individual on himself in every department of life, in politics, commerce, science, will assuredly be simplified by some principle of harmony, of which we trace even now the beginnings. With such an organisation the individual will still be independent, but he may become less capricious and arbitrary; and while his differentiation from others may be apparently limited in range, it will in reality be greater, but more nicely adjusted because regulated by a principle of harmony.

Increasing heterogeneity is therefore an insufficient

description of progress. The result of greater and greater heterogeneity is to produce a new principle which combines the warring elements. Moral history seems to be perpetually taking fresh starts, as mankind, bending under the burden of their inequalities, relieve themselves by a readjustment which introduces simplicity and order.

31. The definition of progress by increasing differentiation, even with the necessary corrections, is too obvious and formal to be of much service. And it is not in the proper sense of the words a historical law. It is merely a very abstract statement of what makes the difference between any one stage of the advance and the preceding. But in two ways it fails of satisfying the conditions required for a law of progress. In the first place, it tells us nothing of the forces by which progress is produced; and in the next place, it gives no connected view of the actual facts of historical development. A law of progress is a phrase that may be used to describe either of two things. It may mean the most general statement of the process of advance. This general statement we have seen reason to find in the notion of a struggle of ideals, and the predominance of certain of them in the effort to maintain moral life under its conditions. This is the historical law of progress in its formal sense. Apart from this, the law of progress should mean some historical generalisation which knits together recorded history. Instances of laws of progress in this sense, though on a minor scale, are that which connects the early history of Greek states—that monarchy is succeeded in order by aristocracy, tyranny, and democracy; and the law of the transition from personal to territorial sovereignty. To compare even such limited generalisations with the bare formula of differentiation is to see the difference between an abstract, if comprehensive statement, and a truly historical law.

32. (*b.*) *The Law of Comprehension.*—Can we then

find any such law in moral development? By following once more the analogy of organic development, we can obtain a description of what seems to be the course of moral progress, in at any rate the most important part of that progress. If we consider the history of animal development, we find that it issues in the end in the production of an animal species, namely, man himself, which either exterminates the other species or turns them to its own uses for food or service. To the extinction of old species by a new one corresponds in the region of morality, not the destruction of those who have different institutions, but the growth of an ideal of life which shall supplant their former ideals, and shall therefore comprehend these different societies of mankind under one comprehensive law; and that not merely in the sense that every society should have a similar code, but that they should form one great society under one single code. We should expect to find the history of morality exhibit the gradual development of a universal moral order, good not for one group of men, but for all. Now this is what we actually do find, though we cannot trace it with equal clearness throughout. To ourselves, the most profoundly interesting and important step in moral history is that from the morality of the peoples to whom we owe our political and scientific culture to the present, or, as it may be conveniently called, Christian morality. Now this is, as, following Green, I have so often pointed out, a process towards comprehensiveness. From one point of view the difference of Greek and Christian morals is that duties which were before binding within a limited range are extended to all humanity. The Greek ideal is a limited ideal; our own is unlimited within the range of mankind. Religion was a powerful agent—perhaps the most powerful agent—in producing this change, but political and philosophical movements were of almost equal importance, though perhaps not so striking.

33. Perhaps this law of comprehension is only the law

of a cycle in human history, not of the history as a whole; for Christian civilisation is not the only instance of the universalising of conduct. Religious and political development have conspired to produce similar results in the East. There the progress from Brahmanism to Buddhism was a process of universalising whose fortunes strongly resembled those of Christianity. However, though here and in Mohammedanism we can trace the same law of comprehensiveness, we are not entitled without further inquiry to assume that either of the two last is universal in the sense of Christian morality, because they depend on very different conceptions of the individual mind. Buddhism, for instance, rests upon a pantheistic basis. Western morality is much more highly concrete and individualised.

34. It would, however, be a misapprehension to regard the change as merely quantitative, as if the virtues were the same, whether they applied on a larger or a smaller scale. The quantitative extension is parallel with and in reality proceeds from a change in the conception of the human person himself. In primitive communities the individual is so limited that he can hardly be called an individual in the proper sense at all. As a member of a tribe or a family, he is in that ambiguous position occupied by animals in colonial structures, about which it is hard to say whether they are so much independent organisms as simply organs of the individual which is the group. Early man appears in like manner to be without personality, his real person being found in the tribe or family, which may be collectively responsible for his deeds. The early Oriental empires, in spite of their vastness, seem to give the individual a not much greater extension. They are as different as possible from the empires of Rome or England, being for the most part simple aggregations of tribes, combined under the rule of a tax-gathering ruler, who leaves them to their individual customs. The review of the Persian army in Herodotus is an apt illustration of the entire diversity

of tribes combined under one single ruler. Their moral ideals are not comprehensive, but highly limited. It is an advance both in the conception of personality and in the range of the individual life when we come to the state as we have it pictured in Greece and described for us by the philosophers. The person is here the embodiment of the social order, in which he acquiesces with cheerful content as reasonable, because the walls of the city contain for him all that, with his limited view, he needs. When this limitation breaks down, and the individual stands forth as independent and self-conscious, the author of the laws he obeys, we have at the same time the extension of the area of persons with whom he is in moral relations.

35. It matters little that the Western ideal of a society of humanity is realised to so slight an extent. The ideal exists, and implies the inclusion of mankind. But in thus developing through the means of Christianity out of a lower stage, it is only a few of the more important institutions of life, the plain and homely duties, which it universalises. The comprehensiveness has not as yet extended plainly further down to civil or political institutions. It is natural that these more intimate institutions should lag behind the more obvious; yet it would be erroneous to suppose that the process of universalising has not touched them at all. The principle of democracy, which we are engaged at the present time in working out, contains an element of universality in respect of the civil and political status of persons, while at the same time it accentuates the solidarity of man in respect of the more ordinary social duties. Democracy is a principle which continues (or perhaps supersedes), under much more complex conditions, and over a wider range of institutions, the same principle as Christianity introduced. And it is not without reason that those whose strongest interest is in religion should seek to employ that force in solving those social problems which the democratic

sentiment has forced into prominence. I call democracy a principle in order to distinguish it from the ancient democracy, which was a mere form of popular government in a slave-holding, or, as we should say, an aristocratic community. Old names are applied to new things which have a formal or superficial resemblance. But modern democracy, though high authority declares it to be also only a form of government,[1] is a new view of political life, which does not necessarily imply a popular government, a democracy in the narrower sense. This political principle pervades nearly all European nations under most varying constitutions—the democratic or republican government of France, the parental and despotic government of Germany and Russia, the mixed constitution of England. One of its elements is that every man shall count for one in political life, and this independence, which he possesses merely as a man, has its complement in the closer drawing together of the bonds which connect men with one another. Much of the difficulty of government in modern states arises from the immense emotional force of sympathy among large masses of men, which supports or repudiates the claims of particular interests.

36. The principle has had its most potent effects within individual states, but it is not merely an identical element in them, but a comprehensive ideal. It began, as we know, as a formulation of the rights of man; and though it has produced no union of nations, it has led to the general recognition of a certain measure of independence which every one may claim simply as a man—a claim which extends beyond the mere observance of the elementary virtues. The simple fact that by naturalisation a man may change his country shows that a human person, as such, is regarded as more than a subject of such duties as courtesy and chastity, and can take on the full functions of citizenship. The *metic* or foreigner in ancient Athens never could exercise the suffrage or

[1] Sir Henry Maine in *Popular Government*.

appear in his own person in a court of law. And it was not till the time of Caracalla, in the third century, that the rights of Roman citizenship were extended to the whole empire. The practice of extradition is rendering it almost impossible for a criminal under one set of laws to evade punishment by taking refuge in a foreign country. Almost all important offences, except political ones, are included in the extradition treaties of England with one power or another.[1] How far must nations have gone towards a completer union when they agree each to protect the laws recognised by the others! And the same process of making all institutions more comprehensive may be traced in the growing interference of civilised opinion in the affairs of individual peoples, in the attempts at common action among the working-classes of different countries, in commercial unions, in the neutralisation of certain parts of the world, like the Suez Canal or the Congo territory, even in the yearly occurrence of International Exhibitions, which, however much devised as a means of attracting trade to certain places, imply the offering of a fair field to the competing industries of all nations.

This process of universalisation may become more complete, and there is therefore nothing impossible in the dream of a political ideal which should comprehend mankind, as the social or humanitarian ideal already does. Such a political ideal would of course include the widest possible political differentiation in its parts within a common political order.

37. One thing further is needed to describe the principle of comprehensiveness, of which we can thus trace the growth in the past, while we can watch in the present the indications of its advance. The comprehension is not merely one of breadth, but of depth: the ideal includes not only the present of mankind, but its whole future also: its range is not horizontal merely, but also vertical. Duties have at all times been recognised to posterity, but

[1] See the enumeration of them in *Encycl. Britann.*, Art. 'Extradition.'

the range of future generations for whose welfare men have to provide has been limited, and at the same time the interests which it is believed could be secured have been limited as well. *Après moi le déluge*, describes a form of selfishness (the most heinous form) which has always existed. But different ages have understood the *après moi* very differently. In early times the obligation to the future hardly extended beyond the duty of providing healthy and strong children for the State: in some cases, as at Sparta, this was provided for by interference in the selection of persons to marry each other; everywhere it was enforced by the destruction of unhealthy or deformed children. As life, even in the embryo, came to be regarded as sacred, the conception of responsibility to the future has deepened. At the present day, at any rate, it is extending its range indefinitely, and at the same time all the moral interests of future persons, not merely their physical health, are taken into account. The fact that qualities physical and mental are transmitted to the offspring, though the limits of that truth are involved in great obscurity, has made the idea familiar to men's minds. And regard for the interests of the future, as a motive for our action in the present, is dictated by the conciousness that every act we do will bear its fruits in the history of the race, whether it is a physical weakness that is transmitted, or a wrong that leaves its indelible mark upon society, and makes the work of progress harder and slower.

38. In contemplating a common political ideal, we must not distort the picture with the fancy of a universal peace. A political humanity, or, to limit the view, a political Europe, would not mean that the clash of arms would cease. It would only do so if nations ceased to commit crimes; and this is as much opposed to our experience as the disappearance of private wrong-doing or the extinction of pain. The coarser forms of dispute do indeed disappear: we should not go to war for the sake of

Helen, if only because it is inconceivable that Helen should, under modern conditions, elope with the younger son of a foreign potentate. But as nations grow more refined in their ideals they become more susceptible. Warfare is to a nation what resentment is to an individual who is attacked in something which touches his personality. What such a political community would mean is the substitution of international punishment for the self-willed conflicts of irresponsible nations.

At present warfare is of two kinds. Sometimes it arises from patent wrong-doing on the part of one or both of the parties. In other cases it is simply a trial of strength between two nations or two sets of institutions, and though each party thinks itself wronged, it is little more than begging the question to condemn either. Which way right lies is as yet unknown. A political humanity means the disappearance of such wars as these last, and the interference of a collective power to check national crime. It is conceivable indeed that, with a sentiment strongly against private war, disputes should still be left to be settled between the parties themselves. This would correspond to the permission of duelling amongst a people which disapproved in general of the insults out of which duelling arises. But just as in some countries duelling has been replaced by law, while in others it will probably die by its ridiculousness or its brutality, so in the end private warfare may be replaced by international punishment. An intermediate stage is represented by those cases where, as sometimes happens to-day, one of the parties is backed by the moral force of the common sentiment.

The history of war exhibits, in fact, the continual interference of recognised law to regulate the struggle. Laws of war appear at a very early stage. But these, which are at first only laws based upon the more strictly social feelings (respect for women and children, for the sick and wounded, for religion, for temples and works of

art), have come to include others of a more complex kind. Aversion to bloodshed forbids excesses, such as the employment of savage means of destruction, while other laws regulate the rights of neutrals. The interference of a common political opinion which would convert warfare into punishment, would be only a continuance of this process. The practice of submitting disputes to arbitration, however little followed hitherto, is a step in this direction; and leagues of peace again mean the creation of a powerful body of opinion which is backed by force. If it is answered that an international tribunal is useless, because no superior controlling force exists behind,[1] the answer is that even within an individual state the employment of force against crime rests only upon a common sentiment in the members of the society. If Englishmen objected to punishing theft, the force of police and magistrates would not exist.

39. But any attempt to forecast the progress of morality is at best a work or a pastime of the imagination. In some ways we can check our imagination by watching the indications of past and present. Thus we are not entitled to suppose that the political universality I have described will simply be an extension of what has begun, and will leave the humanitarian motives in the present condition. These may still keep ahead of the rest, for they too may enlarge through an extension of our sentiments towards the lower animals, and even plants, or inanimate things. So far as the animals are concerned, that sentiment is already in process, and it may extend so as to make what are now the rare sympathies of the poet the common possession of all good men. There is, however, no evidence that the lower animals should ever be admitted into human society as members of it. But apart from our relations to the rest of life, we are, for many reasons, in complete

[1] As by Sir Henry Maine in his posthumous work on *International Law*, ch. xii.

doubt as to the future of moral institutions. In the first place, the physical conditions of existence will probably change greatly, and we do not know whether mankind generally will be able to take mechanical means against the hardships of a new period of ice, or whether only a certain number of races may survive. Nor, again, can we tell whether human society may not be destroyed, to be replaced by a higher type of existence which may arise upon the earth itself from the actual development of humanity, or, what is a more probable and attractive dream, may be produced on some other planet, and take up the tale of human civilisation in the same way as we in England at the present day in our science, our art, our civil institutions continue the civilisation of the extinct societies of Greece and Rome.

40. We may leave such speculations to return to the principle which underlies this examination into moral progress, that in the conscious mind of man the process is repeated which begins with organic forms and ends in the production of man himself. Having attained to man, nature begins the struggle afresh in his mind in the form of social institutions, which are the outcome of his vital activities. The struggle produces the antagonism of good and evil, which we maintain positively by education, and negatively by punishment. And it produces all the diversity of moral codes, with their affinities to one another, and their varying positions upon the course of moral progress. These ideals leave their traces behind them in written records and in monuments of art and handicraft, or, where they have not been extinguished, they appear as survivals in a higher culture, or as independent but very lowly organised institutions of life. Existing as they do within the mind, the moral ideals only partly need for their victory the actual destruction of refractory individuals; they grow by the receptivity of new ideas, though how far this growth is reproduced in actual

nervous organisations has been out of our province to inquire. And just as the animal races extend their limits, and the highest animal, man, spreads his species over all the earth, so his moral ideals seem to be directed towards a system of conduct which shall comprehend all humanity within a single law.

CONCLUSION.

I.—Retrospect.

1. Let us glance back at the results of this analysis. We found that moral judgments are passed upon willed conduct or its equivalent, character; that morality begins to exist at the stage when these phenomena emerge. The special characteristic of such conduct, that it implied a consciousness, though not a reflective consciousness, of its object, has been found to discriminate throughout the phenomena of morality from the parallel facts of lower life.

Such being the constituents of morality, goodness or rightness means an equilibrium of conduct. An act or person is measured by a certain standard or criterion of conduct, which has been called the moral ideal. This moral ideal is an adjusted order of conduct, which is based upon contending inclinations and establishes an equilibrium between them. Goodness is nothing but this adjustment in the equilibrated whole, with which we are familiar under the form of moral approbation. To this there is a complementary truth, that moral feelings are not a new order of feelings distinct from 'natural' human feelings, but are these feelings as regulated to accord with the moral ideal. An analysis of good conduct showed that it embraces the whole of life, and assigns its relative position and value to each of our wants, however diverse in kind, from the desire for food up to the aspiration after truth. It showed, too, that this ideal is the complete standard or criterion of morality, because, in the first place, it includes all the other elements of hap-

piness, perfection, vitality; and conversely these criteria depend for their applicability upon the ultimate criterion of equilibrated conduct. In describing this moral ideal we had to draw a broad distinction between the scale of gifts and that of performance, between the materials which are used up in morality and the equilibration which makes them moral. It is this pathological element in conduct which creates the difference of vocations in the moral ideal, and accounts for the conception of perfection and the scale of merit; and the growth of such fresh materials determines the existence of progress.

2. Progress is essential to morality. Every moral ideal is an arrested moment in the passage from one ideal to a higher. There are always fresh conditions for morality to equilibrate, and these conditions are themselves produced by the attainment of morality itself. The variability of moral ideals pointed the way to an explanation of the dynamical character of morality, of what may be called the history of morality in motion. We could best explain the facts by thinking of the moral ideal as a species, including all the diverse ideals of good individuals according to their vocations as its members, and the bad ideals as other varieties belonging to the same species. Proceeding exactly parallel to the steps by which the generalisation of natural selection is expounded, we found that the law of a struggle between ideals, in which the good ideal is victorious, accounted for the origin of moral distinctions, the discrepancy of good and interest, the outward institutions of punishment and education and the inward sense of responsibility, by which goodness is maintained; for the variety of moral ideals at very different stages of development which exist in the world at one time; and finally, for a movement in the development of morality towards comprehending all humanity in a single system of duties. At the same time the law operates under higher and more complicated circumstances than are found in the animal world. The types

with which we dealt were first of all social types, which implied not simply a multiplicity, but a solidarity of individual persons; and secondly, they were not physical organisms, but ideals or institutions which existed in conscious minds. Except by observing this characteristic feature, or, in other words, if human and animal life are treated as simply identical, without any allowance for difference, the distinctive nature of the facts of moral growth and progress is missed.

II.—The Supreme Principle of Morality.

3. Two things follow from the progressiveness of the moral ideal. One is, that the classification and description of institutions or duties will vary with each age. It is vain to map out a scheme of morality for all eternity. The savage moralist (if there ever was one) would probably never reach the duties towards the state as contrasted with social duties. In some ages, no duty, in the proper sense, to scientific truth would be admitted within the circle of morality; and the details of institutions, such as the relations of the sexes or the rights of property, will vary with every age.

The second corollary is, that as the ideal changes from age to age, the highest moral principle or sentiment will change with it. By this expression I mean to represent the form under which all moral action is regarded at its best. This principle must vary and develope, because the alteration of institutions produces a change in what may be called the moral perspective, though the change may not, of course, be appreciable except after long intervals of time. For example, to the Greek the highest moral conception was that of the fitting, the proper, the just, and the beautiful, and the highest principle the reverence for this. To a Jew, the highest principle was obedience to the law; to others, it has

been the observance of custom. In Christian morality the claims of duty would in general be regarded as supreme. In none of these cases do we contemplate an abstract motive. The sense of duty, for instance, may be, and has been, entertained in the form of devotion to an abstract ideal; but in general it means the treating of particular acts as duties: it is the envisagement of morality under that aspect. I propose to inquire how far the claim of duty to be the highest moral principle is justified, and whether it may not disappear before some higher conception, as the conception of the fitting or beautiful, or of the law has disappeared before that of duty.

4. A belief has gained great authority at the present time that the sense of duty is transitory and will disappear as moralisation increases.[1] Whether we understand obligation, as it has been before described, as the relation of a part of good conduct to the rest, or identify it with coercion, as the author of this proposition does, in neither sense is the proposition true as it stands. If duty means constraint, it by no means follows that it will disappear; for such constraint arises from confronting one inclination with a higher idea, and its disappearance would mean that human inclinations had become constant. But the inclinations are not a fixed store, which when once regulated remain unaltered, but are continually being modified into new forms. Moreover, as progress goes on, sentiments which once were good cease to be good under new conditions, as scalping an enemy would be wicked to-day, but was once a sacred duty. These once good sentiments will therefore be constrained to submit to the new ones that have been generated. This is true with even the simple and primitive inclinations, and it is still more obviously true of the more ideal. The severest struggles of life arise less from our having to suppress the grosser inclinations than from the conflict of one refined motive with another which is higher still.

[1] Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, p. 127.

I have already noticed the fiction by which what is true of morality at any stage whatever is transferred to a supposed stage of ultimate development. Because all morality involves a cycle of conduct in mobile equilibrium, it is imagined there is a final stage of mobile equilibrium.[1] The same fiction seems to be employed here. The theory unconsciously represents a truth (one which is not accepted by its author), that morality at no time implies in itself the compulsion of duty, and this truth it expresses by the fiction that in the evolutionary Utopia it will disappear.

5. In its strict and proper sense, obligation, expressing as it does nothing more than that moral action is the function required from the members of the moral organism, is and must always be true: the fact which makes obligation is always there. At the same time, it may cease to be the natural or highest principle of morality, and may give place to a higher conception. This will not diminish its claims upon our respect and reverence. It will do so only in the eyes of those whose absorption in the present leaves them no sense for ideals and principles which have done service in the past. A great truth may become antiquated, and we are bound to declare it to be no longer true for ourselves; but it is always true so far as it goes, and it has served its purpose before the data became too complex for it to reconcile, and it was replaced.

The sense of duty is in this position. It is not the highest moral principle, and not only does it seem that it will undergo purification or such modification as will replace it by a higher conception, but the process has already begun. The ground of the defect of duty lies in what has been noticed already, that it conceals the spontaneity of morality. Obligation is always negative, always implies subjection to authority. It leaves out of sight that morality is the direction in which the individual

[1] See above, pp. 266, foll.

naturally moves, what is the natural direction having been determined by eliminating all other ideals. And besides this inherent negativity, duty has gathered round it the idea of antagonism to inclination, which, though not belonging to it of right, is inseparable from it in fact. This result has been aided by another influence. Religion and theology have cast over duty the shadow of sin.

6. Sin is primarily a religious, not a moral idea. But just as religion, though not identical with the practice of morality, is based upon it, so the sense of sin is based upon facts which belong to ethics. It is worth while to trace these facts, because the sense of sin lies deep at the roots of human nature, and it is intimately bound up with progress, though it may become inimical to the highest progress. In general, sin is described as a wrong committed against God, rather than as guilt or crime against man, and the term is loosely used without any distinction from wrong. But this description merely emphasises its connection with religion, and is of itself quite vague and obscure, until it can be explained in what sense it is possible to commit a wrong against God. The chief difficulty is to distinguish the sense of sin from the reproaches of conscience. Conscience and sin run parallel. Both are connected with progress; if the sense of sin points the way to a further advance, conscience, we have seen, changes with each new ideal and directs the way. Both of them depend on the presence of goodness: if the reproaches of conscience are heard only through the revival of good sentiments, the sense of sin is felt only with the knowledge of the right: "the strength of sin is the law." But a man may have the sense of sin when his conscience approves, and if we are to see the real nature of sin, we must not take the cases where wrong has been committed, and where the sense of sin is consequently not easily distinguishable from the sense of wrong-doing; but we must begin with

those most striking cases where a man has done right, but in doing so becomes aware of the interval which separates his natural inclination from his virtuous performance. The sense of sin measures the struggle between the passions which suggest wrong-doing and the good ideas which prevail. Hence the greater the merit in good action, and the less the demerit in bad, the keener is the sense of sin. Conscience, therefore, when it condemns, condemns wrong: sin fastens upon imperfection. It thinks not of the right which has been done, but of the passions which made the right so hard to do. We may conclude that when wrong has been committed, the sense of sin regards not so much the wrong itself as the shame of the passions which led to it: it is the feeling, 'How imperfect I must be before I could do such an act!' Just because sin is the sense of imperfection, is it so closely bound up with progress; for progress means the attainment of goodness, and the consequent appearance of fresh demands which make the former goodness bad. No sooner is a passion repressed than a new ideal comes into view, and the resistance of the passion is felt more acutely still. Hence it is that the sense of sin is felt more by the saint than the average man. "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" is the cry of the strong man, not of the weak. Whatever view we take of his ideal, the ascetic who truly lived up to it is only the more impressed with his sinfulness.

7. Sin is thus correlative to wrong, but it is not the same thing. It is the imperfection which may or may not lead to wrong, and it is felt equally whatever the result. I have spoken indifferently of sin and the sense of sin. After the proof that has been given of the identity between goodness and approbation, it is perhaps unnecessary to justify this at any length. It has often been supposed that St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans was confusing sin with the consciousness of it. In truth,

he made no confusion at all: the two are identical. So far as the sense of sin is not present in any individual, his act is sin only from the view of another person who has that consciousness. As the badness of the bad man consists in his disapprobation by the good, the sinfulness of the sinner resides in the consciousness of the man who knows the law. And it is common in our experience to find persons who feel the imperfections of others as sin. They go further: they feel the sins of others as their own personal sins. With many philanthropists it would seem that the misery of their fellows is felt as a sin in which they themselves share. Though a man may feel that he has by his own conduct contributed nothing to the crimes or the imperfections of others, he must be more than a Pharisee who can divest himself of the painful sense that he himself is imperfect while his fellow-men are. And perhaps it is this reflection of the sins of others upon ourselves which lies at the base of the religious conception of vicarious sin.

We have seen that evil or wrong in the general sense is that which is defeated in the struggle with the good. But there is a special part of it which consists of a survival of former goodness.[1] Sin has two corresponding forms—one general, one special. In general, it arises from the tension of the passions against the law; in this general sense every law creates sin. In particular, it arises from the tension of an old law, which was once good, against a new and higher law. The difference between the two may be sometimes expressed by declaring the one to be a law of works or a formal law, the other a law of faith or of grace. To those who live under the new ideal, the men who obey the old law will seem to be living under sin.[2]

[1] See above, Book III. ch. ii. p. 307.

[2] Any discussion of the nature of sin must be based upon the Epistle to the Romans; and I could have lengthened the treatment by reference to passages. *E.g.*, the passage "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (ch. v., 3), explains, with all the

8. The profound truth of sin lies in its thus being bound up with progress, and it has been fixed in men's minds by that moral system which, being itself the most progressive the world has known, has familiarised us also with the idea of progress. But just as we have seen conscience to have its dangers, so the sense of sin has another and less salutary side. It turns the individual back upon himself to lament his imperfections, and envelopes the performance of right conduct with gloom and discontent. In its shadow morality appears as the struggle against some primary wickedness: man's nature is bad, and goodness is the sad conquest over this evil. And in a second way it may impede progress, because, absorbing the individual in the idea of his present imperfection, it may divert him from effort for the future. But the temper which is most effectual for progress is not that which stops to look behind and lament, but that

ambiguity of common language, the identity of sin and the consciousness of it. That sin was in the world before the law seems contradictory, but it merely expresses that before the law acts were done which under the law would be sins; just as the contract theories say that man in the state of nature is just or unjust, though those terms are strictly speaking unmeaning as applied to a state anterior to society. I may observe that the great difficulty of the argument of the Epistle arises from the crossing and confusion between the general and the special forms of sins. There are two contrasts on which the Apostle insists. One is that of law and sin in general, especially in chap. vii., "I had not known sin but by the law." The other is the contrast of the law and the spirit, the one formal and ceremonial, the other a new principle of life (iii. 20). At the same time, the new law of faith is itself declared to be law (iii. 31), and to be in fact fulfilment of the old. [There is a third sense of law = natural law, in vii. 21. "I find there a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."] When St. Paul is contrasting the law of the Jews with Christianity, he thinks of the law as bad. Hence Jews and Gentiles are "all under sin: as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (ch. iii. 9, 10); and in a special sense the Jews, who had the new law offered to them. This he confuses by asserting their wickedness in the ordinary sense of crimes against common moral laws, which is the other and more general sense of sin. Conversely, after chap. vii., when speaking of the conflict between law and sin, or right and wrong, he treats faith as redemption, not from the old law, but from wrong-doing: sin is dead by faith. But St. Paul cannot mean that under the new law of faith sin is impossible, any more than that under the old law every one must have been a wicked man. He must mean that faith overpowers all the inducements to wrong, and this is the language which has always been employed, and is employed to-day, by persons of enthusiastic and emotional natures.

which, profiting by past experiences, uses its regrets as guides for fresh exertion. Discontent has sometimes been glorified as the source of all good; but it is only useful when it gives place to or itself produces the strenuousness to reform, and with it cheerfulness and contentment in doing the hard work of the world.

9. Duty is inseparable from these associations, which have gathered round it owing to its negative element of subjection to authority. But our analysis has shown that this negative conception is not the ultimate expression of morality. The highest conception, while it preserves the idea of obligation and its authority, displaces this by the more positive relation of unity between the part and the whole. Morality is the spontaneous outflow of the sentiments which make the good man. The outward order draws the individual to it, not by the authority of sovereignty, but by the spell of affection. A good man's heart goes out, as we say, to the moral law in a free contribution to a whole which expresses his best. The highest conception of his action is this of free service to an order of life, which on the one hand depends upon him for its maintenance, and on the other gives vent to his energies. Already in the family the scheme of such a principle is found in the care of a man for wife and child, prompted not by compulsion but affection, and rendered freely as his part of the domestic life. Morality is an extension of this free service.

This idea of free service stands in immediate connection with that of progress; for the right is one stage in the forward movement, the solution of the many interests which it finds to hand, and it stands between an old order which it replaces and a new order by which it is to be succeeded. Hence, to work in the cause of progress is not a new conception, but another and more reflective form of free service in the cause of right. This is so, because to do right does not mean to conform to a standard already made, but to co-operate in the making of a

standard. 'Make the world better than you found it,' is identical with 'Help to produce the right which comes into existence only through your help.' To some, morality will present itself more naturally as making for progress; to others, the idea of free service will make the directest appeal. But there is no such thing as a duty to progress over and above the co-operation in right. There is of course a duty to posterity, no matter where the limits of posterity are drawn; but this duty is included in the ideal of right action, and is different from a duty to progress. A father will wish to give his sons greater advantages than he had himself, but he looks at what he thinks good for them with the eyes of his own time. He cannot see their ideals as they will see them when the world's ideas have moved onwards. When he is dead and gone, his grandsons may think he had limited views of life, and, with the naïve sense for truth of the heroes of the Iliad, will "claim to be much better than their fathers." The only duty to progress lies therefore in doing your duty towards the work of the present, as the present is understood, when it is corrected by care for the future so far as the future and its problems can be foreseen.

10. These two equivalent conceptions of morality have their corresponding sanctions. As to a good man the highest principle is to render his service to his community, so his highest sanction, more bitterly felt than any punishment of the law, is the sense that that service has been neglected and an injury done to his fellows. From the point of view of progress his worst reproach is that he should have been on the side of retrogression, and have done anything to leave the world worse than he might have left it.

Viewed in the light of this its highest principle, morality knits up the historic continuity of a people or mankind by the bond of gratitude. Devotion to the right is a debt we discharge to the past, which has made

us what we are, able to work according to our gifts for the present and the future—

> "'Here and here did England help me: how can I help England?'—say."

Nor is it to the purpose to deplore that, for all our efforts, we can never banish evil from the earth, and that the proportion of wickedness to goodness does not greatly vary; that as the removal of old material evils makes us sensible of new, so, as the coarser forms of wickedness are mitigated, they are replaced by others subtler and perhaps more insidious. These are the very factors of our progress, in which what is good comes to light by a process in which it rejects and conquers what, in virtue of this defeat, is bad. Swimming in the trough of a wave, we know that if we mount the next we shall sink down as deep again. Meantime we move onwards. And if, looking back upon the past from the vantage-ground we occupy in the present, we can see that the history of morality is a succession of beneficent and adorable illusions which for men are truths, then common-sense itself and reason, which is but common-sense guided and restrained by reflection, while it expands in the warm light of imagination, alike bid us treat according to the best of our judgment the mischiefs we can feel and can foresee, and leave to the future to cure its own as yet unimagined evils.

11. Free service to a whole which is in continual progress is nothing but the analogy of animal life pushed forward one stage further. Why it is applicable and enters into our moral ideas arises from all those causes tending to make the idea of organic life appropriate to human society, of which some sketch was given in the Introduction. One word may be added in explanation. The society to which moral conduct is a contribution may vary in its range from the immediate surroundings to humanity itself. But even when an act is claimed in

the name of humanity, it is no less a duty towards a particular person or a limited society. Morality only implies that, however wide or narrow the society, the service should be rendered freely. Hardly any temperament is so ineffectual for progress as that which, because its sympathies are widely diffused, cannot at the same time intensely love a few. Conversely the greatest goodwill to all may co-exist with extreme incompatibility of tastes and disposition in respect of some. There are some persons whose characters we may respect, and even admire, to whom we should wish all good, but of whom we cannot help feeling that five minutes in their presence are as a thousand years.

And if the principle is thought impracticably high for ordinary life, the reply is twofold. First, there are some people to whom any moral principle would seem too high. But, as we should not go to them for practical advice, so we need not think of them as the sources for a theoretical statement of the highest morality. The second answer is to refer to the facts, to ask whether this sentiment is not yielded by an analysis of moral ideas as at present held, and whether it does not animate great movements, even when the actors would be unable to give a definite description of the faith that is in them, and is not avowed, or at least acted upon, by the best men, and especially by good men among those whose testimony is all the more powerful because they reject the higher ideas with which morality is associated in the minds of most.

12. Of another subject which was touched upon in the Introduction we are reminded here—the affinity of present moral ideas to those of Greece. Free service recalls the noble name of piety,[1] by which classical times, borrowing the name from the relation of a son towards his father, expressed men's highest duty towards

[1] Piety is the name which Clifford gives to the moral disposition (*Lectures and Essays*, vol. ii. p. 112). It is difficult to express in measured terms the loss which English philosophy suffered by Clifford's early death.

their country; and its prevailing mood recalls the cheerfulness and geniality which distinguish their ethical ideas. It differs from piety in respect of that conception of free or independent individuality which lies at the basis of progress. While the Greek thought of the state as a great community in which all had their parts to play, he had not yet learnt the true relation of the individual to the whole. The whole was a limited ideal, and in its limitation seemed to be something prior to the individual, which existed as a finished product before him, and was indeed often regarded as the work of a legislator. Along with this contracted view went the absence of the idea of progress in the proper sense. Beyond the notion of a cycle in history, and the idea that after all parallel institutions may be found in earlier times, we find in Aristotle and Plato no account of progress in the sense of an indefinite movement by insensible gradations. The Greek despised the Barbarian or foreigner as below his own standard: we study even the savages, as a clue to our own characters, though some among us profess to be shocked at recognising in their grimaces the germs of our more decorous customs.

13. Piety, therefore, is attachment to an order of life, but differs, in so far as it is no more than this, from co-operation in making an order which is only one stage in the forward movement. In the principle of conduct, which has been described as the highest present conception, we seem to have two ideas combined. We have the idea of piety dignified by such a conception of human nature as admits a movement of progress. On the other hand, we have what may be called the Christian ideas of duty and of the creative originality of the individual, divested of the unrest and discontent which gather round these ideas. As a result, we have here in the domain of ethics that love of man for a higher and larger order than himself, which morality represents as solidarity with society—a continuously progressive society of free indi-

viduals; which religion represents as the love for and of God. I do not wish to wander out of the field of ethics proper, but two questions, to which I shall not attempt to give an answer, may pertinently close the inquiry. The first is, Whether the difficulties in which Christianity as a religion is placed at the present day do not arise from the absorption of its highest idea into the conceptions and the practice of morality? When what was once the inspiring idea of a religion becomes part and parcel of the moral ideal, the religious sentiment proper is starved. The second question is, Whether the ideal of a free co-operation towards bettering the world in its onward movement may not be used to interpret the belief in immortality, putting in the place of a super-sensual existence the continuance of the life of every one in the persons whom he may affect by word, or thought, or deed? Like footsteps in a gallery, our lightest movements are heard along the ages. But to ask such a question is only a liberty which I allow myself at the conclusion of my task, partly because it illustrates how the results of ethics supply the data for metaphysical problems.

THE END.

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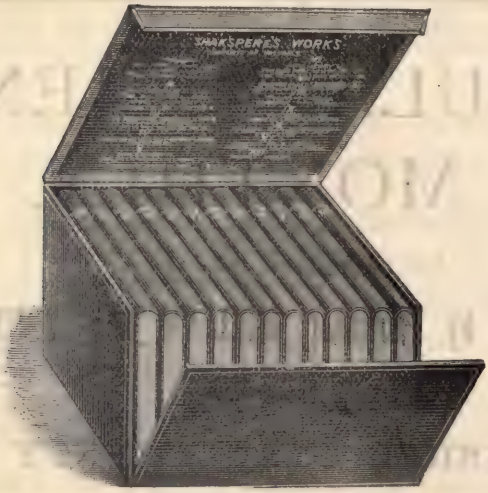

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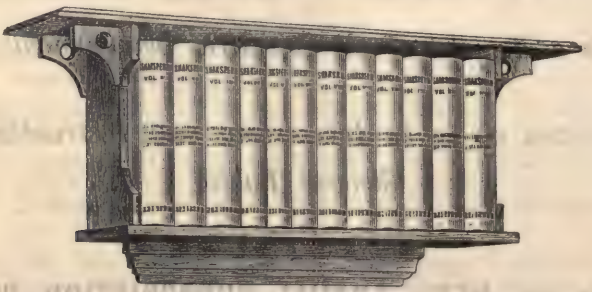

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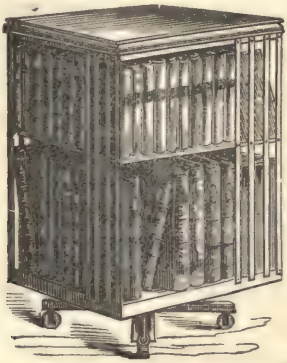

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